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NEW YORK AND LONDON

AMERICAN LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

FIFTH SERIES—1903-1904

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

BY

GEORG STEINDORFF, PH.D.

Professor of Egyptology at the University of Leipzig

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TO MY FRIEND

EDWIN BECHSTEIN

IN TOKEN OF HEARTY GOOD-WILL

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The fifth course of lectures, contained in the present volume, was delivered in the spring of 1904 by Prof. Georg Steindorff, Ph.D., Professor of Egyptology in the University of Leipzig, on the Religion of Egypt. Prof. Steindorff enjoys a high reputation as a scholar and has had, in addition, the advantage of practical experience in investigations and explorations in Egypt. Among his larger and better known works are his *Koptische Grammatik*, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs*, and *Durch die Libysche Wüste zur Amonsoase*. Perhaps the work which makes him best known to people at large is his guide-book to Egypt in the Baedeker series. He is also editor of the series *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*, and, together with Prof. Erman of Berlin, conducts the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*.

The lectures in this course were delivered before the Lowell Institute, Boston; Yale University, New Haven; Union Theological Seminary, New York; Brooklyn Institute, New York; University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; Theological Seminary, Meadville, Pa.; University of Chicago, and, by special arrangement, three lectures of the course were also delivered before the University of California.

JOHN P. PETERS,
C. H. TOY,
MORRIS JASTROW,
Committee on Publication.

April, 1905.

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THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

LECTURE I.

The Egyptian Religion in the Earliest Times.

THERE is probably no people in the world's history, not even the people of Israel, into the innermost life of which religion penetrated so deeply as was the case with the ancient Egyptians. To describe the Egyptian religion, therefore, is to tell the most important part of the story of ancient Egyptian civilisation. The materials now at the command of the investigator into Egyptian religion and mythology, as into the details of Egyptian worship and ceremonial, are of vast extent and are daily increasing.

Formerly, none but foreign sources were open to the student — the reports of Greek classical writers, such as Herodotus, Diodorus, Plutarch,

Horapollo, together with the biblical narrative of the Old Testament. Now, however, the deciphering of the hieroglyphic characters and the systematic exploration of the Nile valley during the course of the last century have made native sources accessible and intelligible to us as well. The number of them is almost incalculable. There is hardly an Egyptian text that does not contain some statement bearing on ancient Egyptian religion. Every wall of a temple or tomb, every memorial stone, nearly every papyrus, even such simple objects as limestone fragments or potsherds covered with writing—all give us help of greater or less importance towards understanding the religious thoughts and feelings of the Egyptian people. It may be said boldly that quite nine-tenths of the Egyptian writings preserved to us were devoted to some religious purpose, and that of the remaining tenth the bulk contains more or less information on religion.

But in spite of this abundance of religious texts and descriptions, of figures of gods, of amulets, of temples and tombs, that have been preserved to us from ancient Egypt, our knowledge of the Egyptian religion is still relatively small; and, for the present, no scientific treatment of the subject is possible which does not leave large gaps and in

part depend on hypothetical constructions. The causes of this peculiar, and at first surprising, fact are very various. It must not be forgotten that the whole of the material preserved to us owes its existence to chance. A certain part of the religious literature has been preserved for the sole reason that it was copied on the wall of such and such a tomb, or contained in a papyrus deposited with the dead in his last resting-place. But other religious writings of equal importance have been lost, because no such multiplication of copies of them was required by any custom. Many a document, again, may still slumber beneath the arid sand of the desert, awaiting the hour of its discovery.

To this must be added that the greater part of the documents, inscriptions, and papyri which have been preserved owe their existence to certain funeral customs, and relate to the life hereafter. Thus we are very well informed on the "Last Things"; but of the numerous legends connected with the gods which were current among the people, and which in many instances must have received literary treatment and so been committed to writing, only a very few have been handed on to us, and those few in a fragmentary condition. There is an absence, finally, of any comprehensive account of Egyptian philosophy — a

defect which we cannot hope to see remedied by some happy accident, since no such account ever existed, any more than in the case of Egyptian history, or Egyptian politics.

To these deficiencies of external tradition must be added others of an internal order. Those religious writings which have reached us present very great difficulties of interpretation which scientific research will not surmount for a long time to come. Many religious works—I will only mention the so-called *Book of the Dead*—are known to us only in late editions and late copies. By the comparison of different copies we are often enabled to restore a passage to its original form ; but not infrequently the text is so corrupt that, with the means now at our disposal, we are obliged to abandon all hope of emendation. Linguistic difficulties also occur, and sometimes there are stumbling-blocks in the subject-matter.

The consequence is that while a great number of Egyptian gods are known to us by name and aspect, while we know in what shrines and by what priests they were worshipped, their true character, the significance attached to them by priests and people, the legends that clustered round their personality, are largely unknown to us. Still, for all the gaps in our knowledge, the Egyptian religion

possesses abundance of interest for us: it is the religion of a highly civilised people, a religion which, like the whole of Egyptian culture, followed its own development in entire independence of all foreign influence, a religion which for almost four thousand years occupied a position of central importance in one of the greatest states of antiquity.

But before I enter upon my main task—that of presenting to you an account of the ancient Egyptian faith—it will be necessary for me, in order to make the course of religious development more easily intelligible, to give first a short sketch of ancient Egyptian history, or at least of its most important periods. Following Manetho, an Egyptian priest who wrote an historical work in Greek, and who was guided on this point by native tradition, we divide the Egyptian rulers, from Menes, the first king, down to Alexander the Great, into thirty-one Dynasties. These correspond, on the whole, to the different royal families which ruled successively, at times simultaneously, in the valley of the Nile.

For the sake of convenience in dealing with facts on a large scale, it is usual to combine several Dynasties into larger groups, which are called "Ages" or "Kingdoms." Thus, to select three of the most important among these groups, corresponding to three culminating epochs of Egyptian history, we

speak of an "Old," a "Middle," and a "New Kingdom." It is extremely difficult to assign exact dates to the several Dynasties, or even to the reigns of particular kings. We must be content with approximate dates, so far as the earliest period is concerned, and bear in mind that the figures we adopt are not final, but may need to be varied by as much as a hundred years or even more. It is not until we reach the Twelfth Dynasty, from which dates have come down to us guaranteed by astronomical evidence, that we find ourselves upon chronologically safe ground.

"Egypt is a gift of the Nile." This phrase of the geographer Hecatæus, first repeated by Herodotus and afterwards by many others, expresses the true character of the land of Egypt with inimitable brevity and appropriateness. In the lofty desert plateau which occupies the whole north-east portion of the African Continent, the Nile has by the long labour of thousands of years carved itself a valley out of the sandstone and limestone, while its regular deposits of mud have made the lower part of this valley, Egypt proper, one of the most fertile regions of the earth.

In primitive ages not only the upper Nile valley, below the modern Khartoum, but Egypt as well, was peopled by African negroes. Their language was an African tongue; their religion hardly to be

distinguished from the rude fetishism practised by so many African tribes of to-day. The Egyptian peasant tilled his field with hoe and plough after the subsidence of the autumn floods. The fens of the Delta gave pasture to numerous herds of cattle. The stagnant branches of the river and the stretches of swamp which extended through wide tracts of both Upper and Lower Egypt were fringed with thick clumps of papyrus and tenanted by hippopotami, crocodiles, and waterfowl in great abundance. To these wild regions the Egyptian would come in his boat of bulrushes to subdue with boomerang and harpoon the denizens of the marshes. Or else he would climb the desert mountains to the east or west of the valley, and turn his weapons against the lion, the jackal, or the hyena.

Hard necessity educated the people gradually into civilisation and culture. The superabundance of water which inundated the land every summer needed to be divided equally among the fields. For this purpose dams and canals, sluices and embankments had to be constructed. Marshy regions required to be drained and transformed into arable land. All these were works which the individual could not execute unaided; the inhabitants were compelled to band themselves together in large associations and place themselves under the orders

of a common head. Thus small principalities arose, governed by petty chieftains.

Such is the stage of political development and civilisation which the Egyptians of the primitive age must have reached when there burst upon the land a flood of Bedouins, streaming across the Isthmus of Suez from Arabia, the ancestral home of the Semites. As in Mohammed's day, six centuries after Christ, the invaders took the land by storm. The African population were unable to withstand the Asiatics; they even adopted the language of the strangers, impressing upon it, however, the stamp of their own individuality. On the other hand, the Arabian intruders gladly subjected themselves to the doubtless superior civilisation of the natives, and with great rapidity conquerors and conquered became fused into a single people. Nothing remains in later ages to remind us of this prehistoric Semitic conquest; it is solely on the foundation of linguistic kinship that we are able to construct an hypothetical account of the events which I have just roughly sketched.[1]

In that early period there were formed, out of the

[1] *Cf.* Erman, "Das Verhältniss des Ägyptischen zu den semitischen Sprachen" (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xlvi., pp. 93 *ff.*), and "Die Flexion des ägyptischen Verbums" (*Sitzungsbericht der Königl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1900, pp. 350 *ff.*

various small principalities into which the land was divided, two states of larger dimensions: a Lower Egyptian Kingdom occupying the "North Land," corresponding to the Nile Delta, and an Upper Egyptian Kingdom, the "South," which extended from the neighbourhood of the modern Cairo up-river as far as the rapids of Assuan. The chief city of the North Land was Behdet, which stood on the site of the modern Damanhur, in the west of the Delta. The King of the South, on the other hand, resided at Ombos, on the west bank of the Nile, a little to the north of the modern Luxor. For centuries these two states existed side by side, each independent of the other, till at last they became fused into a single empire. Upper Egypt was conquered by Lower Egypt. The capital of the new Empire was probably *Heliopolis*, situated on the border of the two states, and named On by the ancient Egyptians; a city which at the same time became the intellectual metropolis of the country.[1]

[1] For the above-mentioned hypothesis, that before the division of Egypt into the dominions of the kings of Buto and Eileithyiaspolis the country had been already portioned out into two separate kingdoms with the capitals Behdet and Ombos, I am indebted to my friend Professor Kurt Sethe of Göttingen. It rests on the fact that as late as historic times Horus, the god of Behdet, and Set, the god of Ombos, were still worshipped as patrons of Lower and Upper Egypt respectively, on certain features of the Horus–Set legends, on formulæ of the titles of the Pharaoh (*e.g.*, the title "Horus who is

We cannot determine, even approximately, the length of time during which this unified Egyptian empire maintained its existence under the sway of the Kings of the Delta. Gradually the bonds of empire became loosened, and Egypt was once more divided into two states. As before, one of these comprised the Delta, the other the upper Nile valley as far as the cataracts of Assuan. The capital of the North Land was now transferred to the later Buto, in the marshy region near the Mediterranean coast; the kings of Upper Egypt took up their residence far to the southward, in the city of Nekheb, afterwards known as Eileithyiaspolis. After this division, again, it would seem that the relations between the Upper Egyptian kings of Eileithyiaspolis and the Lower Egyptian kings of Buto were not of the friendliest character. Not infrequently wars broke out in which the Upper Egyptians carried "terror into the hearts of the Lower Egyptians who are in Buto." From these struggles Upper Egypt finally emerged victorious; the Delta was subdued by force of arms, and the two kingdoms united into a new state. We are probably not wrong in identifying Menes, whom Egyptian tradition, followed herein by the Greek historians, names as the first human king of Egypt,

standing on the god of Ombos," *ἀντιπάλων ὑπέρτερος*, which was formerly erroneously translated as "the golden Horus"), etc. Compare Sethe, *Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte Ägyptens*, p. 31.

with the ruler who accomplished this work of reunion (Ca. 3315 B.C.).[1]

But little is known of Menes and his successors, the kings of the first two dynasties (Ca. 3315–2895 B.C.). On the border of the "two Lands" Menes founded the "white walls" of the later Memphis, a citadel designed to overawe the conquered Delta. The kings resided at Thinis, a city of Upper Egypt, in the neighbourhood of which, near the modern Nakada, as well as farther north near the sacred city Abydos, their modest tombs were discovered in the closing years of the last century.

The Third Dynasty (Ca. 2895–2840 B.C.) transferred the royal residence northward to Memphis. Here we fix the beginning of the Old Kingdom, which comprises the dynasties from the third to the sixth, and is placed by us in the period 2840–2360 B.C. It is an epoch of great power, in which Egypt attained a culminating point in its civilisation and art. From this period date also the Great Pyramids, especially the Pyramids of Ghizeh, which owe their existence to the three famous kings of the Fourth Dynasty, Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus. For this reason the Old Kingdom has also been named the "Age of the Pyramids."

[1] As to the dates of Egyptian history compare Eduard Meyer, *Aegyptische Chronologie* (Berlin, 1904).

Towards the end of the Sixth Dynasty the empire is disintegrated; internal disorders break out, which last until the princes of the Eleventh Dynasty—a family sprung from Thebes in Upper Egypt—succeed in reuniting Egypt and restoring settled government (Ca. 2160–2000 B.C.). With the rulers of the Twelfth Dynasty, who bear the names Amenemēs and Sesostris, there begins a new era of prosperity for the country—the Middle Kingdom. The duration of this period is taken to be from 2000 to about 1790 B.C. The rulers of this brilliant epoch conquered the upper part of the Nile valley, or Nubia, and constructed great works, such as the celebrated Labyrinth. Literature, too, flourished so greatly in this age, that the Middle Kingdom was regarded by later generations as the classical period *par excellence* of ancient Egyptian authorship.

A fresh disruption of the state brought the Middle Kingdom to an inglorious end. To this period belongs an event of great importance in religious as well as political history: the invasion of the land by hordes of Semitic Bedouins, who came from the Syrian desert under the leadership of the Hyksos or "Shepherd Kings." Taking advantage of Egypt's political weakness they possessed themselves of the country "without striking a blow," and held it for a century (1680–1580 B.C.).

It was by Theban princes that the ancient state was again restored and the Asiatic invaders driven out of the Nile valley after a series of conflicts extending through many years. Here begins a new period of Egyptian greatness,—the New Kingdom as we often term it,—comprising the dynasties from the eighteenth to the twentieth, and extending from 1580 to 1100 B.C. The great Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Amenophis and Thutmosis, lead their armies into Asia, penetrate as far as the banks of the Euphrates, and make the whole of Syria an Egyptian province.

Close intercourse was thus established between Egypt and the civilisation of the East, Assyria and Babylon in particular, as well as with the civilisation known as the Mycenæan; and this intercourse exerted a great influence on the whole life of the people, their politics no less than their art. Under the kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty, a Sethos and a Ramses, Egypt in a great measure lost its position as a great power; and in spite of several military successes the Ramessidæ of the Twentieth Dynasty were unable to arrest the decline. At last the powerful high-priests of the Theban divinity, Amon, ascended the throne. They in turn were displaced by Libyan commanders of mercenary troops, who maintained themselves in power for about a century.

Gradually the state fell once more into decay, and dissolved into small principalities. These, again, were destroyed by the Negro kings of Ethiopia (Nubia), who descended from the south and conquered the Nile valley, which they held till they were driven out of the land by the great kings of Assyria, and Egypt became for some time a province of the Assyrian empire. This period of foreign dominion, comprising the dynasties from the twenty-second to the twenty-fifth, during which the throne of the Pharaohs was occupied successively by Libyans, Ethiopians, and Assyrians, is one of the most melancholy epochs in ancient Egyptian history.

At last Prince Psammetichus of Sais succeeded in shaking off the Assyrian yoke, ended the rule of the petty native princes, and reunited Egypt. Under him and his successors of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (663–525 B.C.) the land enjoyed a new era of prosperity. Trade flourished, thanks to the relations established with Greece, and the arts received a new impetus. A tendency had already set in during the rule of the orthodox Ethiopians toward the imitation of the models supplied by the classic period of Egyptian art, the Old Kingdom, and the revival of early forms. Nor was art alone affected by this movement; in the worship of the

gods and the early kings, in literature, in the orthography of the inscriptions, in the titles of the officials we find the same imitation both of the Old and the Middle Kingdom; so that the period of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty may justly be termed the "Egyptian Renaissance."

But with the year 525 B.C. the independence of Egypt came to an end. The land was conquered by Cambyses, and became a Persian province until the year 332, when it fell into the hands of Alexander the Great. The world-empire of the latter broke up after its founder's early death, and Egypt finally came into the possession of Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, and his successors, known as the Ptolemies or Lagidæ. Under them the valley of the Nile became for three more centuries the seat of a brilliant monarchy, till at length, torn by civil wars and involved in the internal troubles of Rome, it passed, after the battle of Actium, into the hands of Augustus. Both the Ptolemies and the Roman emperors posed before the native population as the successors of the Pharaohs, and kept up the fiction of a national Egyptian state. They respected the religious views of their subjects, and even engaged in the construction of great temples. But the intellectual force of the people was destroyed; the old national life had died out; and there was little to hinder the

triumphal entry of Christianity into the land of the Pharaohs.

He who would understand the religious thoughts and feelings which prevailed among the Egyptians of the "historical period" must turn his gaze backward and seek acquaintance with the worship of those dark primeval ages when the "two Lands," Upper and Lower Egypt, were still independent neighbours, and as yet there was no union of all Egypt into a single state. The Semitic immigrants had assimilated the superior civilisation of the African population and at the same time accepted their rude religion. You will ask, perhaps, whether they did not also retain the divinities of their desert home, whether some of these were not deemed worthy of worship by the conquered Egyptians—whether, in a word, ancient Semitic elements did not gain a footing in the primitive religion of Egypt. To this question we can return no scientifically satisfactory answer. It is easy enough to play with etymologies and on the strength of them to set down particular Egyptian divinities as Semitic, or, again, to eject summarily from the Egyptian Pantheon all the members of it which do not fit into a superficial scheme. Such hypotheses, however, are none the more probable for their boldness; and we shall do well, provision-

ally at least, to abstain altogether from speculations on the possibly Asiatic or Semitic origin of any elements whatever in the primitive Egyptian religion.

So much only may be regarded as certain,—that in the beginning there was no uniformity of religion in Egypt. Every city, every town, every hamlet, possessed its own protecting deity, its own patron. To him the inhabitants turned in the hour of need or danger, imploring help; by sacrifice and prayer they sought to win his favour. In his hand lay the weal and woe of the community; he was the "Lord of the district," the "urban god," as he is named in the texts, one who, like a secular prince or duke, controlled the destiny of those committed to his care, and protected their life, their goods and chattels against external foes. His goodwill procured blessings for men; his wrath was destruction.

So closely was the deity linked to his district that frequently he even lacked a name of his own, and was designated simply by the name of the locality which was under his rule and in which he manifested himself. Thus the local deity of the Upper Egyptian city Edfu was spoken of shortly as "he of Edfu," the female saint of Elkab was "the lady of Elkab." As a rule, it is true, each local god had a special name. The god of Memphis was named *Ptah;* the patron saint of the cataract district near

Elephantine was *Khnum* (Chnubis); the patron saint of Ombos, near Nakada in Upper Egypt, bore the name *Setekh* or *Set;* the god of Koptos, on the caravan route from the Nile to the Red Sea, was known as *Min;* the guardian deity honoured in the Fayoum, the region of Lake Moeris, was called *Sobek.* Among female divinities we may mention *Hathor*, the name borne by the "Lady of Dendera," *Neit*, the goddess of Sais in the Delta, *Sekhmet*, the patroness of a suburb of Memphis. It is impossible to repeat to you the names of all the local divinities; it would be necessary for me to go through the entire list of ancient Egyptian localities, and that would take us too far afield.

As to the significance of the names borne by these divinities, it is only in a few cases that we are able to state anything with certainty. Thus we know, for example, that *Sekhmet* means "the powerful one." The etymology, too, of these names is unknown to us in most cases. If, for instance, the name of the god *Ptah* has been connected with the Hebrew *patach*, "to open" or "to carve," and explained as meaning "the carver" or "the artist"; if, again, the name of the god *Horus* has been interpreted in accordance with the Egyptian language as "the lofty one" or "the heavenly one"—all this is more than problematical. The theologians of ancient

Egypt, moreover, applied themselves in their day to the study of these etymologies, for which they had a great predilection, and by playing upon words endeavoured at once to explain the names of the gods and set forth their attributes. Thus *Amon*, the name borne by the god of the later empire, is interpreted by them as "the hidden one," "the mysterious one," from the root *'emen*, "to be hidden"; and even Plutarch says, in his work *De Iside*, that according to Manetho the name Ἄμουν signifies τὸ κεκρυμμένον καὶ τὴν κρύψιν, "that which is concealed and concealment." The theologians doubtless had in mind a divinity who early appeared in their inner or secret doctrine—the god "whose name is hidden"; but the original meaning of *Amon* cannot by any means be regarded as thus made known to us.

Originally the mission of these guardian deities was exhausted in the protection of their cities, outside of which their power ended. But with reference to many of them we find a deepening or expanding of religious ideas at quite an early period. Particular functions of their nature were brought into special prominence. Thus Amon, who was worshipped at Thebes, was a god of fertility and generation; the god Min of Koptos, whom the Greeks identified with their Pan, protected the

herds and the roads, especially the desert track leading from Koptos through the mountains to the Red Sea; the "mighty" Sekhmet of Memphis was regarded chiefly as a terrible goddess of war who annihilated her enemies; with Hathor of Dendera the stress was more on the pleasant side of her character, and she was honoured as a goddess of love and festivity.

More especially were these local deities, in many cases, connected with the great powers of nature, particularly the heavenly bodies. Thus Thout, the local god of Shmun or Hermupolis, whom the Greeks identified with Hermes, was regarded as a god of the moon, and appears as such in the venerable Pyramid texts. He was deemed to have appointed the seasons and the order of nature, for which reason he was also looked upon as the inventor of writing and language, as the creator of time and measure, as the god of learning. Above all, a great number of local divinities were connected with the greatest luminary of the heavens, the sun, and represented as sun-gods in quite the earliest ages. But in the case of one of the most widely worshipped and most national gods of Egypt, Horus, who is found as a local divinity in several different Egyptian cities, and who was worshipped everywhere as god of the sun, the course of religious de-

velopment was probably of another kind. We shall shortly have occasion to treat the subject fully.

Besides the great "urban deities," there was a not inconsiderable number of minor gods, spirits, and *dæmons*, who were able to benefit or injure men on particular occasions, whose favour, therefore, was much sought after. Thus worship was paid to certain benignant goddesses who succoured women in their hour of need, and could hasten or retard delivery. There were also fairies who were believed to visit the cradles of new-born infants "in order to decide their fate." Exceptional popularity was enjoyed by the little grotesque god Bes. He was supposed to have come to Egypt from Punt, the legend-encircled land of frankincense, and his protecting care was over perfumes, rouge, the mirror, and other articles of the toilet.

Equipped with higher, superhuman power, the deity works upon men within a limited sphere, and receives in return their gifts, their sacrifices. But he also manifests himself under a definite form. As the human soul dwells in the visible body, so also the godhead makes his abode in particular objects. As a rule it is in stones, trees, pillars, and animals that the gods choose their residence. The local god of the Delta-city Tetu, the later Busiris, was a rough stake. The god of the highways, Min of Koptos,

likewise revealed himself in a stake or in a heap of stones, which latter was probably set by the way-side, and may well have received a new stone from the hand of every passer-by, as is now the custom among the Bedouins. A Hathor dwelt in a sycamore, a nameless *dæmon* in an olive-tree.

But it was more common to conceive of the deity as an animal. Thus the water-god Sobek, the patron of the lake district of the Fayoum, manifested himself as a crocodile; the god of Mendes appeared to the faithful as a he-goat; similarly, a he-goat was the embodiment of Khnum, the god of the cataract district. Amon of Thebes took the shape of a ram with downward-curving horns that covered his ears. Wep-wet, the god of Siut, was a wolf; the moon-god, Thout of Hermupolis was a baboon or an ibis. Many gods appeared in the form of hawks; the sun-god Horus, the moon-god Khons of Thebes, the god Montu who was worshipped in a part of Thebes and in Hermonthis.

The various local goddesses were imagined by preference as dwelling in cats, lionesses, vultures, or snakes: thus Sekhmet of Memphis and Pekhet of Speos Artemidos (near Minjeh) were lionesses; the goddess of Bubastis a cat. Hathor of Dendera bore the likeness of a cow; Mut of Thebes and Nekhbet, the goddess of Elkab, appeared as vul-

tures; the goddess of Buto assumed the form of a snake, though she was also worshipped as an ichneumon or as a shrew-mouse. It is thus a fully developed fetishism that we have to deal with.

These crude notions about the gods may at first sight, perhaps, strike us as peculiar and unworthy of a civilised people. When the Greeks and Romans first made the acquaintance of the Egyptians, they, too, shook their heads over this conception of deity and turned it into ridicule. And yet similar notions are to be met with in the case of other civilised peoples, both among the Semites and in the oldest Greek religion. As you are doubtless aware, the Semites also worshipped the deity in trees, in stones, the so-called *masseba*, in pillars, the *ashera*, as also in animals. And as for the Greeks, we know that Hermes, the god of pastures and highways, revealed himself in a heap of stones exactly as did his Egyptian counterpart, the god Min. We know, too, that Apollo revealed himself in the guise of a wolf, Artemis as a she-bear, Hera, the consort of Zeus, as a cow. We need but call to mind the Homeric epithet *βοῶπις* "the cow-eyed." And when we are told that the sacred bird of Zeus was an eagle, that of Aphrodite a dove, that of Athena an owl, the meaning is only that these divinities originally manifested

themselves to their worshippers under these animal forms.[1]

One step in advance of this crude fetishism was taken by the Egyptians somewhere about the Second Dynasty, when they began to represent their deities in human form. A god would now appear with human limbs. He wore the same clothing as the Egyptians themselves: a simple tunic, behind which, as in the dress of the earliest rulers, there hung down the long tail of an animal. His head was adorned with a helmet, a crown, or with lofty plumes. As the symbol of his power he carried a sceptre and general's staff; the goddesses carried in their hands long papyrus-stalks.

This new conception of deity also reacted upon the old fetishistic ideas and modified them. The sacred stakes were transformed into images of the gods in human form — a transformation usually effected by giving the stake the appearance of a body swathed in bandages. It was thus, in all probability, that the image of Min had its origin, and probably that of the Memphian Ptah as well. Even those deities which were conceived of as animals were now transferred to human forms, except that the place of the human head was taken by the head of the animal sacred to the god. Sobek was

[1] *Cf.* Ed. Meyer, *Geschrifte des Altertums*, ii., §§ 64, 65.

represented as a man with the head of a crocodile, Thout with the head of an ibis, other gods with the heads of sparrow-hawks; the goddess Sekhmet received a lion's head, Heket that of a frog. Extravagant and absurd as all this seems to us, it must be admitted that both in the statues and in the bas-reliefs of animal-headed gods the artists shewed admirable skill in contriving the transition from the animal head to the human body. For the rest, the Egyptians still retained the old crude notions about their deities, which they portrayed in the form of their fetishes.

But besides the local divinities imagined in animal shape, there were other animals which were worshipped as gods and made the centre of special cults. Particularly was this the case with those animals which aroused the admiration of the Egyptian peasant by their more than human strength. Of such there are two the worship of which began very early and continued to the latest period: the divine Mnevis-bull of Heliopolis and the Apis-bull of Memphis. The latter, so the Egyptians related, was engendered by a flash of light which came down from heaven and impregnated a cow that never afterwards produced any more young. He was black with white spots. On his forehead he had a white triangle, on his right side the figure of the

crescent-moon; on his back he generally wore a red cloth. The priests exercised themselves in theological speculations in which they sought to establish a connexion between this highly regarded bull and Ptah, the local divinity of Memphis; the former, so they concluded, was the son of the latter, or, to use their mystic language, a "living repetition" of Ptah.

So far I have laid continual stress on the particularism of the Egyptian religion, and have pointed out that the original state of things was one in which each locality had its own tutelary god. Yet at the same time the Egyptians possessed a definite stock of common religious ideas, the intellectual heritage of the nation just as much as the common language which every Egyptian spoke. Thus, in spite of all political disunion, the whole people, without distinction of locality, believed in definite superhuman beings, manifesting themselves in nature. Among these was the sun-god Horus. He was universally imagined in the likeness of a falcon with brilliant plumage, soaring in the heavens and dispensing light to the world. But in particular places this heavenly god entered into closer relations with men; in such instances he has undertaken the special care of a smaller human community, has, in short, become a local god. Accordingly,

Horus, who originally dwelt only on the horizon, occurs again as protecting deity in various cities. It was the same with the water-god Sobek; throughout Egypt he was known as a *dæmon* residing in the waters, who revealed himself to man in the form of a crocodile. But he received special honour and the rank of a local divinity in cities the weal and woe of which were dependent upon water—in the lake region of the Fayoum, on the islands of Gebelên and Ombos in Upper Egypt, or at Khenu, a city situated near the many whirlpools of the modern Silsile. In the same way the different forces of nature became local gods in many instances and received special homage.

We have thus accounted in one way for the fact that the cult of one and the same god is found in different cities. But this fact is also to be explained in part by migrations which took place in the earliest ages. Let us imagine the inhabitants of a particular locality leaving their home and settling in a new region. They will certainly take their local god with them and prepare him a sanctuary in their new abode. Again, doubtless men remarked that a certain god protected his district with a strong hand, that he showered benefits on its inhabitants and performed miracle on miracle in their midst. Other places would then resolve

on pilgrimages to this great god, or even build him a new house, set up his image in it, and offer sacrifices to him, in order to participate in his mighty favour. Thus gods came to live in cities where they were not native, and, taking their place by the side of the local divinities proper, acquired fresh circles of worshippers, or even became themselves patrons and guardians of their new abode.

When the inhabitants of a place lived at peace with their neighbours and kept up a close and friendly intercourse with them, their respective divinities would naturally have their share in these amicable relations. Like men, they paid and received visits on particular days; indeed, the temple of a city god contained a chapel for the special use of foreign divinities, where the latter were worshipped according to their own rites. Thus the local god, while remaining the chief god of a district, was by no means the only divinity to whom the inhabitants paid homage. Side by side with him, and regarded in a manner as his guests, were other deities who likewise received divine honours. And something of the same kind took place when several smaller localities, each possessing a patron of its own, became merged into a larger unit: the old gods would then necessarily possess in the new community a centre of worship.

The priests early endeavoured to introduce order among the different gods thus domiciled in a city and to determine their relative rank. For reasons which remain unknown to us they grouped them in Triads or threes. This was generally done by assigning to the chief god a goddess as his wife and to the pair a third god as their son. Thus in Thebes the principal god, Amon, was accompanied by a goddess, Mut, "the Mother," and her son, the moon-god Khons. In Memphis the worship received by Ptah, the patron of the city, was shared by the goddess Sekhmet as his consort and by the god Nefertem as their son. In some other places, for example, at Elephantine, on the southern frontier of Egypt, Khnum, the god of the cataracts, was associated with two goddesses, Satis and Anukis.

In many cases, no doubt, the popular belief allotted to a particular local deity a religious significance above his fellows; more often it was the political position of a city that augmented the celebrity and power of its patron. If, for example, a small city gained the hegemony of a wide district, the "urban god" became the god of a region, the patron of a whole province, worshipped in its temples along with the local gods.

When two great kingdoms arose in Upper and Lower Egypt, then the local god of the city from

which the king came and in which he resided became privileged above all other gods; he was elevated into the tutelary divinity and patron of the whole state. Thus Horus of Behdet was god of Lower Egypt, Set of Ombos the god of Upper Egypt. The kings themselves came to be regarded as the earthly representatives, as incarnations of these guardian gods, and were designated simply as "Horus" or as "Set." And again, when the two states had been in conflict with each other for a series of years and Lower Egypt had emerged the victor, it was thought that the patrons of the two realms had taken part in the strife, and that Horus had finally defeated Set. The destinies of the peoples became the destinies of their protectors.

In later times the memory of those primeval wars faded away; but men still told how the two gods had fought together. The priests now read a deeper meaning into the legend: Horus was the bright god of the sun who sustains a perpetual conflict with Set, the husband of Darkness; every evening he is defeated, but only to rise again the following morning in a new form and enter upon the conflict once more. When Egypt was for the first time united into a single state and came under the sway of one ruler, the Pharaoh was regarded as the earthly embodiment of the two patron gods,

as Horus and Set in one person, or rather (for the northern half of the realm had subdued the southern) as "Horus, who stands above the god of Ombos."[1]

Later a similar part was played in the second dual conflict by the guardian divinities of the two capitals Buto and Elkab: here, again, the snake-goddess of Buto became the patroness of the Delta, and the vulture-goddess of Elkab of Upper Egypt, while after the second unification the two patronesses became the special guardians of the Pharaoh and remained so ever afterwards. Thus a part of the political history of Egypt had in the earliest ages left its imprint on the religion of the people.

A very special part, which is as yet not explained, was played among the local Egyptian deities by the god Osiris. He was originally domiciled in the Delta, probably in the city of Busiris. From here the worship of Osiris spread over the whole land. Abydos became one of the chief places of his cult, and there, among the tombs of the ancient kings, a later time placed also the grave of this god. The legend which is related of him was a favourite among the tales of the Egyptian gods, and allusions to it are found at every step in the earliest texts which we possess, the Pyramid texts. Unfortunately we

[1] *Cf.* Sethe, *Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte Aegyptens*, p. 73.

possess no connected narrative of the myth dating from antiquity and must therefore reproduce it in the late and quite corrupt form in which it is preserved by Plutarch.

The celestial goddess Rhea (in Egyptian, Nut) and the god Kronos (the Egyptian earth-god Geb) had, according to the Egyptian belief, four children: the gods Osiris and Set (the Greek Typhon), and the goddesses Isis and Nephthys. Osiris acquired the sovereignty over Egypt and made his subjects happy. He gave them laws, taught them to honour the gods, and introduced agriculture. Later he travelled over the whole earth as an apostle of civilisation, making little use of armed force, but winning the hearts of men for the most part by persuasion and teaching, by all manner of song and music. For this reason also the Greeks believe that he is the same as Dionysos. After his return Set plotted against him and gained seventy-two men as fellow conspirators. He secretly took the measure of Osiris's body, constructed to this measure a beautiful chest with rich adornments, and brought it with him to the banquet. While all the guests were enjoying and admiring the sight of it, Set jestingly promised to give the chest to him who could lie down in it and fill it exactly. All tried in turn, but no one would fit. At last Osiris himself stepped in

and lay down. The conspirators hastened forward, nailed down the box from outside, poured molten lead over it, carried it out to the river, and despatched it to the sea, down the Tanitic branch of the Nile.

When Isis learned of the death of her husband she set herself to search for his corpse and was at last informed by children that the box had been carried down the Nile to the sea. She further learned that the box had been washed ashore in the neighbourhood of Byblos. A magnificent heather plant had grown round it and enclosed it in its stem. When the King of the land saw the plant he had it cut down, still containing the coffin, and set it up as a pillar to support the roof of his house. Isis heard of this and went to Byblos, where she was received in the palace and appointed by the Queen as nurse to her child. The goddess one day revealed herself to the Queen, requested that she might have that pillar, easily drew it away from under the roof, and cut the coffin out of the tree-trunk. Then she threw herself upon the still closed chest, and took it away with her in a ship. It was not until she reached Egypt and found herself alone that she opened the coffin, laid her face upon that of the dead, and kissed it tearfully. She then went to her son Horus, who was being brought up in

Buto, and concealed the coffin with the corpse of Osiris. One night, when Set was hunting by moonlight, he found the coffin, recognised the corpse, tore it into fourteen pieces, and scattered them abroad. No sooner had Isis heard this, than she began to collect the separate parts; for which purpose she went about the swamps of the Delta in a skiff of papyrus. Wherever she found a member she buried it. That is why there are so many graves of Osiris in Egypt.

When Horus was grown to manhood he prepared himself with the help of Isis to take vengeance on Set for the death of his father. The fight lasted for many days, till at length Horus gained the victory. Set was bound and handed over to Isis; the latter, however, did not kill him, but let him go free. In a fit of anger Horus tore the crown from her head; but Thout (or Hermes) replaced it by a cow's head. Such, roughly, is the main content of the legend as handed down to us by Plutarch.

I shall return to Osiris and his life and give them closer consideration later on.

In Egypt, as elsewhere, men's ideas of the universe, in particular of the heavens and the heavenly bodies, were closely connected with their religious thoughts, properly so called, though perhaps less so than was the case with the ancient Babylonians.

The picture which they drew of the world shows how narrow was the geographical horizon of an Egyptian in the earliest times. Egypt for him is the entire earth: it is an elongated oval surface, traversed in the direction of its length from north to south by a broad river, the Nile. Round about it there rise high mountains, the desert heights which enclose Egypt. Upon these rests heaven, often conceived as a flat plate, from which the luminaries hang like lamps. According to another view heaven is supported by four pillars which stand at the four corners of the earth. Others think that the heavens are fashioned exactly like the earth—that they, too, are traversed by a river and intersected by numerous canals. Under the earth, too, a counter-earth is supposed to lie, the *Dwet*, which is made exactly like the earth and the heavens, and is peopled by the dead. There was yet another way in which the heaven was conceived, viz., as a great cow held fast by several minor divinities and supported by the god Show. The stars are attached to her belly, while the sun-god rides by day upon her back in a boat.

The world, gods, and men, are naturally not imagined as having existed from the beginning, but as having been created. In the individual priestly colleges different theories were held about this creation, just as about the nature of the world itself.

The most common belief was that the local god, the lord of the city in question, was at the same time the creator of the heavens and the earth. Thus it was believed in Memphis that the god Ptah, the great artist, had carved the earth as if it were a statue. In places, such as Elephantine, where Khnum was worshipped as guardian, the god was supposed to be the creator of the world. He had taken mud from the Nile and out of it had formed the world-egg, as a potter working with his wheel. In Sais the goddess Neit was believed to have made the whole world as a weaver weaves a piece of cloth. These local cosmogonies must not be understood too literally; in many of them there can be no doubt that poetic fancy played a considerable part.

The most widespread of all was a belief which perhaps proceeded from the priestly college of Heliopolis. According to this there was in the beginning a great primordial body of water called Nun, which contained all male and female germs of life. Out of it came the sun, the Rē as it is called in Egyptian. In this water, too, lay the earth-god Geb and the heavenly goddess, Nut, locked in a close embrace, until the god of the air, Show, parted them from one another and carried the goddess of heaven in his arms into the upper regions.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Maspero, *Histoire ancienne de l'Orient*, i., p. 129.

The Nile, too, "which gives Egypt life, which preserves all men by food and nourishment," was considered as a divine being. It was represented as a man-woman, with the bosom of a woman and a long beard framing the face. The dress was that of an Egyptian seaman.

It was the heavenly bodies above all of which the Egyptians conceived as divine beings. Must not the Egyptian peasant, when of an evening he cast his gaze upwards to the wonderful brightness of the starry heaven, have been inclined to the thought that up there, too, gods dwell? Thus in the most beautiful of all the Egyptian constellations, Orion, he saw a god, and in the brilliant Sirius a goddess, Sopdet, or Sothis; but above all he regarded the sun as a divine being who governs the course of the world. There was great variety in the theories which were held about the greatest of luminaries in the different priestly schools of the country. I have already mentioned what I believe to be the common Egyptian idea, according to which the sun was a hawk, the god Horus, who soars in the heavens with his brilliant plumage. Otherwise the sun-god sailed during the day over the waters of the heavens just like an Egyptian seaman, only every evening he must descend into the lower world and there continue his voyage. Others, again, repre-

sent the sun-god in the somewhat ridiculous form of a dung-beetle, or scarabæus. Just as the latter rolls in front of it a little ball containing its egg, so the god rolls in front of him through the heavens the round globe of the sun. Yet others think that every morning a lotus-flower springs from the water bearing a little boy — the sun-god — sitting in its blossoms.

Thus the picture which I have been able to sketch to you to-day of the oldest form of the Egyptian religion accessible to us is composed of extremely varied elements; on the one hand we have seen the local divinities, on the other, cosmic beings standing at an infinite distance from man. How the two became blended by theological speculation, and how from the combination an almost new religion arose, will form the chief theme of my second lecture.

LECTURE II.

The Development of the Egyptian Religion.

A FAVOURITE thing to say of the ancient Egyptians is that they were a pre-eminently conservative people. This is doubtless true. The Egyptian clung as stubbornly as the Low German to the manners and customs which were his heritage from the earliest days. But it must not be inferred that the Egyptian civilisation was a barren one; that it remained for thousands of years at the stage which it had reached before the dawn of Egyptian history. In the language of the Egyptians, in their writing and their literature, as also in their political life and their art, there is discernible a continuous development. This, to be sure, does not at once strike the casual observer, whose first impression, on being introduced to a mass of new and strange facts, however diverse, is generally one of uniformity. Only by degrees does the student find the conviction growing upon him that in all peoples, the Egyptian as well as others, mental and spiritual life is never stagnant but always in motion.

There is certainly one respect in which the civilisation of the Egyptians was more conservative, more continuous, than that of other peoples. The laws which had been evolved in the earliest times retained their authority for thousands of years; and the development of civilisation almost always followed the paths which primitive ages had traced out for it. This is true in the sphere of writing, of art, and also in that of religious ideas. New thoughts, no doubt, were afterwards woven into the primitive fabric; but the Egyptian religion, in its earliest form the product of special political relations, never underwent radical revision, and the only attempt in this direction of which history tells was a dismal failure.

In the earliest times, as you will remember, there were formed out of the various minor states of Egypt two kingdoms, a Lower and an Upper Egyptian Kingdom. It was by the subjection of the latter that the land first became a political whole. The capital of this united Egypt, as we may assume with great probability, was Heliopolis, or, to give it its Egyptian name, On. This name is doubtless known to you from the Bible, for Joseph's wife, Asenath, was the daughter of Potipherah, a high priest of *On* (Gen. xli., 50; xlvi., 20). The city lay only a few miles to the north-east of the modern Cairo.[1] Its

[1] *Cf.* Baedeker's *Egypt*, 5th edition, p. 107.

guardian was the god Atum. His worship was accompanied by that of the sun-god, and here it would seem that it was the visible luminary, the Rē, to which men paid homage. He was regarded as the god "who resides in an egg [that is, the sun], who sends forth light from his celestial abode, who rises in his horizon and swims upon his brass [that is, the brazen plate of heaven], whose like is not found among the gods, and who illuminates the world with his brightness."

Within the temple, probably beneath the open sky, stood a pillar of stone as the direct recipient of the worship paid to the great god. Later, this pillar was given a symmetrical artistic form, and thus the obelisk took its rise — a gently tapering column with a pyramidal apex.

Whereas in other instances the great cosmic divinities followed their own courses far above the doings of men, the sun-god of Heliopolis entered into special relations with the human race and received a special worship. He was the greatest and mightiest of the gods. The priesthood of Heliopolis, however, did not rest content with the mere proclamation of these attributes, but applied themselves with a certain amount of logic to deducing their consequences; by which means they arrived at a deeper conception of the god's nature. They

discovered, first of all, that there was only one sun-god, Rē, and that the old sun-god Horus, who soared as a hawk above the heavens, was the same in essence as Rē. The two differed only in name. The god was therefore named "Rē-Horus, who is in the horizon," and the same fusion appeared in his picture, where the hawk-headed Horus is seen surmounted by the sun.

Similarly the old local god Atum was identified with the sun-god Rē-Horus; and he, too, was assumed to be the same being as Rē, only known by a different name. The old sun-god Kheperi, who was represented as a scarabæus, furnishes another example of this process. All these divinities were regarded as particular forms or "Names" of the one single god.

Now this view was perfectly consistent with the assignment of special functions to each of these sun-gods — with the conception, for example, of Rē-Horus, or of Kheperi as the evening, or of Atum as the morning sun. The sun traversed the heavens in a vessel, but while he went for his morning sail in the good ship *Menezet*, he took his seat for the evening in the bark *Mesektet*, which carried him over the western horizon to the fabulous mountain *Menu*. The manifold legends which in the various localities had been woven round the daily course of the sun were now

transferred to the one sun-god of Heliopolis. Contradictions thus arose, sometimes of the most curious kind, but no attempt was made at reconciliation. The number of sun-myths must have been simply enormous; allusions to them occur in almost every religious text. It is, however, only a very small part of them that has been preserved to us.

Of these legends relating to the sun-god there is one which I should like to relate somewhat fully, in order to give a fair idea of what these ancient Egyptian myths were.[1] In this particular instance the sun-god Rē is presented to us as a king who exercises sovereignty over gods and men. Like an earthly prince he sits on his throne and communes with his subjects. But he shares in the sorrows as well as in the joys of earth. In particular, he is not gifted with eternal youth; old age is advancing upon him, and men begin to refuse him obedience, much as the Egyptians might treat a grey-headed king. Such is the situation to which the legend introduces us:

"His Majesty was old: his bones were of silver, his flesh of gold, and his hair of pure lapis lazuli. But men conspired against him. Thereupon his Majesty perceived the designs of men and spoke to his attendants: 'Call hither to me my Eye [*i. e.*, the goddess Hathor],

[1] *Cf.* Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 267 *ff.*

the god Show, and the goddess Tefnut, together with the divine fathers and mothers who were with me when I still lay in the primordial ocean Nun; call also the god Nun himself. He will surely bring his servants with him. But let them come hither in secret, that men may not see. Come with them to the palace, that they may give me counsel.' Then these gods were conducted thither, and they prostrated themselves before him so that their foreheads touched the ground.

Then said they to his Majesty: 'Speak to us, that we may hear.' Then said Rē to Nun: 'Thou oldest among gods, from whom I had my being, and ye, my divine ancestors, ye see how men, that are sprung from mine eye, have devised rebellion against me. Now, therefore, tell me what may be done against them, for I will not slay them until I have heard your counsel on the matter.'

Then the Majesty of Nun answered: 'My son Rē, thou god that art greater than thy father, and mightier than they who created him, remain [in peace] on thy throne, for great is the fear of thee if only thine eye [be turned] upon those that have conspired against thee.' Then the Majesty of Rē spoke: 'Behold how they flee into the desert; their heart is afraid because of that which they have said.' Then said they to his Majesty: 'Let thine eye [*i. e.*, the goddess Hathor] descend, that she may smite those that have sinfully blasphemed against thee.' (Thus it was done).

Then the goddess returned, after she had slain many men in the desert. Then said the Majesty of this god [namely Rē]: 'Welcome, Hathor, hast thou performed that for which thou wast plucked out? Hathor answered: 'By thy life, I have gained the mastery over men, and this is pleasant to my heart.'

But the pouring out of blood was not yet ended; on the next morning Hathor desired to continue her work. But now Rē had compassion upon men, and took thought how the slaughter might be stayed. He sent messengers in haste to the city of Elephantine and caused a special kind of fruit to be brought from there. This he commanded to be trodden at Heliopolis, and out of the juice slave-women made beer—seven thousand jugs full. Now this beer had the appearance of human blood, and it was by this intoxicating beverage that men were to be saved. Early in the morning Rē caused the jugs to be brought to the place where Hathor desired to slay men. The peculiar beer was poured out, and the fields were flooded with the red liquid.

In the morning when Hathor came she found a lake of beer, in which her features were beautifully mirrored. She drank of it, and returned home drunk, being unable to distinguish men. Thus men were saved from the wrath of Hathor by a device of the sun-god. But his heart was tired of residence among them; he therefore returned on the back of the heavenly cow, and nominated Thout [the god of wisdom] as his vicar on earth."

But the priests of On-Heliopolis were not content to elaborate only the legends of the sun-gods. They also cast into fixed and final shape the story of Osiris, which I narrated to you in my former lecture, according to Plutarch's version, and the history of the struggle between the provincial gods Horus and Set. It was probably through this process of priestly elaboration that the figure of Horus came

to be introduced into the Osiris-myth at all: Horus was made into a son of Osiris, and Set, the national enemy of Lower Egypt, was denominated the hostile brother of Osiris. Through the expansion of the rôles assigned to these gods, and through the fusion of certain features in the old legends, a host of contradictions was very naturally introduced into the whole mythology. But, as I have already stated, the priests of Heliopolis did not feel these absurdities as such; they saw profound wisdom in the contradictions, and set themselves with unparalleled ingenuity to disentangle the perplexities of their own creating. Their ultimate aim was to ascertain the "names" of the great gods and find learned interpretations of the various names and appellations.

Nearly all the religious texts bear the stamp of the priesthood of On; and it is probably within the mark to say that the greater part of Egyptian religious literature was produced, or at least published, in that city. The literary activity of these priests lasted down to the Greek period, and their fame extended to Greece itself. As late as in the time of Herodotus the Heliopolitans were deemed the "most learned" (λογιώτατοι, Herod., ii., 3) of all the Egyptian priests; and scholars, such as Plato and Eudoxus, went on pilgrimages to the "City of

the Sun," in order to hear the last word of wisdom in the school of its priests.

The development of mythology was accompanied in Heliopolis by the endeavour to comprehend in a single system the creation of the universe. At the beginning of all things, and thus at the head of the series of gods, was placed the local god of Heliopolis — Atum, identified with Rē-Horus. After him, in order of creation, came the earth-god, Geb, and the goddess of heaven, Nut, together with the god of the air, Show. As Geb had a female divinity by his side, a similar companion was found for Show—the goddess Tefnut, who was afterwards explained as the "dew." Next to these came Osiris, as the son of Geb and Nut, and Set, with their female counterparts, Isis and Nephthys. A cycle of nine gods was thus constructed, representing the origin of the world and the early history of Egypt; to this theology gave the name of "*The Ennead* (*i. e.*, the group of nine gods) of On."

A second or "*Lesser Ennead*" was afterwards constructed on the pattern of the first, and in it various local gods found a shelter. Foremost among them was a special form of Horus, Harsiēsis, that is, Horus the son of Isis, the youthful hero of the Osiris-legend, who was born in the lonely marshes of the Delta and there brought up by his mother Isis.

In this new position he was regarded as a sun-god and the eight divinities who came after him, whose names are not given with certainty by our authorities, were his defenders against his enemies.

Among these eight, according to Maspero, were first of all the Horus of Edfu; he pierced with his lance the hippopotami and the serpents which disport themselves in the celestial waters and menace the safe voyage of the sun's vessel; there was further Thout, the god of wisdom, who guides the vessel's course by his magic songs; lastly there was the local god of Siut, Wep-wet, who steers the vessel and in case of need tows it by a rope over the shallows.

These two sets of nine were finally completed by a third, composed of the "children of Horus" and the "children of the god Khenti-Kheti," the local god of Athribis. In the texts these beings are commonly designated as "spirits," sometimes also as "gods," and it would appear that they were not gods in the full sense, but occupied an intermediate position between gods and men. As to the significance of this third set of nine, we are in complete uncertainty.[1]

The dogma of the creation and of the early history personified in the "Great Ennead of On" was

[1] *Cf.* Chassinet, *Recueil de travaux*, 19, 23 *ff;* Sethe, *Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte*, p. 9.

now adopted by other priestly colleges of the country, and by them brought into harmony with local feeling on the principle of setting up the local god in the place of Atum, the patron of Heliopolis, to head the list and receive honour as creator of the heavens and the earth. Thus at Memphis we find the god Ptah, at Thebes, later on, the god Amon, holding the first position among the primordial gods. In priestly colleges devoted to the worship of a female patron no difficulty was felt in transferring the honours of Atum-Rē-Horus to her. Thus Neit, at Sais, and Hathor, at Dendera, were raised to the rank of leading divinity.

Besides the cosmogonic system of Heliopolis, there were naturally others. But only one of these succeeded in maintaining its position in Egyptian theology and acquired a reputation at all comparable with that of its great rival of Heliopolis. This was the system of Hermupolis, a city of Upper Egypt, which worshipped as its patron Thout, the god of wisdom. In this system the creation was represented by an octave (Ogdoas) of gods. The number, so it would appear, was fixed at eight because the Egyptian name of Hermupolis, *Khmunu* (*Shmun*), likewise means "eight." This simple circumstance is by itself enough to show that these eight cosmogonic gods owe their existence not to popular legend but

to theological speculation. Here, too, we find four male divinities paired each with a goddess invented expressly to be his companion. The gods are: Nu, Hehu, Kek, and Nunu; the goddesses: Nut, Hehut, Keket, and Naunet. At the head of them appears the local god Thout-Hermes. The gods are depicted as men with frogs' heads, the goddesses with the heads of serpents,[1] otherwise all eight take the form of their master Thout and appear as baboons. It is in this form that we find them again and again greeting the rising sun with their hymns. We have unfortunately no knowledge of the significance attached to these four pairs of gods. Lepsius saw in them the four elements: water, fire, earth, and air. Brugsch explained Nu and Nut as primordial matter, Hek and Heket as active force, Kek and Keket as darkness, Nunu and Naunet as cosmic precipitation. This, however, is bold speculation, which can hardly reproduce the thoughts of the old priests of Hermupolis.

The priestly doctrines in the form in which they were elaborated at Heliopolis, at Hermupolis, and in other religious centres, naturally enough never became the common property of the people. On the contrary, they were wrapped in the robe of secrecy and guarded as special mysteries, into which

[1] *Cf.* Maspero, *Hist. anc. de l'Orient*, i., p. 149.

only the elect might penetrate. The Egyptian peasant knew nothing of the one original sun-god of whom the other sun-gods were particular "names"; he did not trouble himself about greater and lesser enneads and the mystic beings composing them; he repeated his simple morning and evening prayer to the sun, and presented, as of old, his modest offering to the divine protector of his native place.

Among the priests, on the other hand, the doctrine of the sun-god won greater and greater approval. In the historical period it would appear to have received a special impetus from the kings of Dynasty V. These kings were descended, if we may trust the statement of an ancient story-book, from a priest of the sun-god who lived at Sekhebu, a city of Lower Egypt in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis. The legend relates that the sun-god himself was the father of the first three sovereigns belonging to this royal house; that the gods gave assistance at their birth and presented them with kingly crowns. The new rulers devoted themselves with particular zeal to the service of Rē, and in his honour they built in the necropolis of Memphis special temples, arranged after the pattern of the temple of the sun at Heliopolis.

This preferential worship of the sun-god stimulated the tendency to identify other gods with him.

Even deities who had originally had nothing whatever to do with the sun, for example, Sobek, the old god of water, or Amon, the god of the harvest, were conceived as sun-gods, and portrayed with the addition of Rē's insignia—the solar disc encircled by the poisonous uræus-serpent. Similarly, the female deities were conceived as goddesses of heaven, identified with each other, and represented with the sun above their heads.

The Egyptian religion entered upon a new phase of its development in the "Middle Kingdom," when the political centre of gravity of the realm was generally shifted southward. During the internal confusion which had brought the "Old Kingdom" to its end, the Upper Egyptian city Thebes had acquired power and reputation. It was by Theban princes that the reorganisation of the state was successfully carried out; and though the kings of Dynasty XII. transferred their residence to the lake district of the Fayoum, the city from which they had sprung remained the object of their fostering care. The Theban local divinity, Amon, identified with the sun-god and transformed into Amon-Rē, was set above other gods, and honoured by new temples and costly gifts. Later on, Thebes was the headquarters of the struggle against the Hyksos, and after its termination the chief city of the

"New Kingdom." Amon-Rē now took the leading position in the Egyptian Pantheon. Under his protection the Pharaohs led their victorious armies to north and south, to the Euphrates and far into the Soudan; and the chief part of the booty which was brought back to the Nile from the conquered lands fell to the lot of the Metropolitan patron-deity, Amon-Rē. It was he that had given to the Pharaoh, "his own begotten son, his earthly likeness," the sovereignty over the world, and therefore he, too, —and his priests—must receive the due reward.

Thus in the "New Kingdom," Amon became the *national god* of Egypt; besides him no other god played any considerable part in the state religion except only Rē-Horus of Heliopolis, and Ptah, the local divinity of Memphis, the capital of the Old Kingdom. To Amon in the first place, and after him to Rē-Horus and Ptah, shrines were set up in the conquered lands, and the foreign subjects paid homage to these gods as the guardians of the Egyptian state. At the same time the priestly religion, that is, the theology with syncretistic tendencies, made further progress. Wherever local divinities were separated by only small differences of character or aspect, it became the custom to blend them together and explain them as different forms of *one* deity. Thus, in particular, the mighty Amon-Rē

was identified with other gods, with Min of Koptos and Khnum of Elephantine. Bastet, the protectress of Bubastis, became one with the goddesses Sekhmet and Pekhet, all of whom manifested themselves as lionesses or as cats, and these again were identified with Mut the mother of the gods, the consort of Amon, who was worshipped at Thebes.

That by this means the already existing uncertainty and confusion in the Egyptian Pantheon could not but be increased, is sufficiently obvious. Certainly it would have been no great task for an ingenious mind to have brought order into this remarkable medley of religious and mythological beliefs, belonging to different times and different places. It was only necessary to reflect upon the efforts which were being made to fuse together the different local divinities and represent them as gods of the sun or of the heavens—a tendency which easily led to the inference that the worship of the primeval guardian gods was now obsolete, and that no justification remained for anything but the worship of a small number of gods or even of a single one.

But where was the man courageous enough to put such a theory into practice, to thrust on one side the ancient cults, and introduce a new one in their place? Would not the priestly colleges of the whole country have fought against such an undertaking and de-

fended the peculiar privileges and attributes of their gods? In particular, what would the priests of the Theban Amon have said to such a dethronement of their god, they who celebrated with such pride the power and glory of their patron? Would they not have opposed with all their force the introduction of another god, a greater god than Amon? And what of the great mass of the people, who clung with deep reverence to the ancient gods of their homes, and troubled themselves little about theological systems? How should they have allowed themselves to be convinced that the rule of their guardians was a thing of the past, that a new god had taken their place and must be worshipped with prayer and sacrifice by order of the government? And yet the day was not so far distant when the bold venture was to be made, an attempt to overthrow the gods of the earliest ages and inaugurate the reign of a single god in heaven and on earth.

Within the circle of the ancient and reverend priesthood of Heliopolis it had been matter of envious and jealous observation that the Theban patron, Amon, had been elevated to the national god of the Egyptian empire, and that great power had been acquired by his priests through the prodigal generosity of the kings. According to the claims of the Heliopolitan priesthood, the sun-god, Rē-

Horus, was the ruler of the whole world, whereas Amon was no more than Ptah of Memphis, or Sobek, the lord of the Fayoum, that is, no more than a local god, a prince as compared with a king. But Amon had shown his favour to the Pharaohs with such power that the latter could not be guided by the jealous wishes of the old clerical party and concede to Rē-Horus the first position in the religion of the state. Chance came to the aid of the priests of Heliopolis.

King Amenophis III. died in the year 1392, and was succeeded by his son Amenophis IV. The latter had possibly been educated among the priests of Heliopolis; in any case, he was possessed by the belief, cherished in that city, that the sun-god was the greatest of all the gods, and had therefore the best right to universal worship and the richest endowment with earthly goods. The priests succeeded in winning over the prince to their side and found in him a powerful supporter of their claims. More than this, in the theological school of Heliopolis a special secret doctrine had been developed in which it was taught that the purest form of the sun-god was not to be found in the "Rē," but in one single manifestation of him, the solar disc. To this a special name was given: "Rē-Horus, who shouts for joy on the horizon, who rejoices in his

name 'Brightness that is in the globe of the sun.'" What this peculiar title means we do not know, and just as little do we know what the devotees of this god taught about him. But it would seem that Amenophis received this doctrine of the pure solar essence with enthusiasm; he joined the circle of worshippers and even became "First Prophet" of the god.

Hardly had Amenophis IV. been crowned upon the throne when he made his attempt to advance the honour of the new god throughout the land. He openly professed himself, and that even in his royal style and title, as the "first prophet" of this remarkable god, and commanded that a great and magnificent shrine should be built to the latter at Thebes, in the immediate neighbourhood of Amon's temple. In the reliefs which adorned its walls the new god was represented exactly like the old Rē-Horus, in the form of a man with the head of a hawk, wearing for a crown the sun encircled with the uræus-serpent. In Memphis, too, and in other cities temples were built to the many-named Rē-Horus or the "solar disc," as he was shortly named—in Egyptian *Aton*.

In Middle Egypt, in the region now named el-Amarna, after a tribe of Bedouins, he even received a special sacred district, a kind of State of the

Church, which was known as the Ekhut-Aton, that is, "horizon of the solar disc."

The entourage of the king, the courtiers, and officials, followed the example of their master and professed the new faith, even when they had not accepted it in their hearts. With all the zeal which Amenophis displayed for his god he at first allowed the worship of Amon and the other local gods to continue, he even did not scruple to appear in portraits and inscriptions as a worshipper of Amon, of Thout, of Set, and other divinities. That, in spite of this the religious endeavours of the ruler met with powerful resistance from the priestly colleges of the land, especially from the priests of the Theban Amon, is not to be wondered at. But this opposition did not discourage the king from introducing the cult of his god; it rather fanned the flame of his fanaticism to greater fierceness and drove him at length to the last decisive step.

In the sixth year of his reign the worship of Aton was made the religion of the state. The Egyptians, as well as the Nubians and Asiatics who had been subjected to the empire, were officially required henceforth to serve only this *one* god. In Egypt the temples of the other divinities were everywhere closed; their property was sequestrated. The statues of the ancient gods were ordered to be de-

stroyed, their portraits erased from the temple walls, their names blotted out. More particularly an active persecution was set on foot against Amon and his family, the mother-goddess Mut, and the moon-god Khons. The name "Amon" was altogether proscribed and nowhere tolerated. He who bore a name compounded of Amon renamed himself; and of those who did so the king himself was one of the first. He renounced his name "Amen-hotep," Amenophis, which means "Amon is content," and was henceforth known as "Ekh-en-Aton," that is, "Spirit of the solar luminary."

The king had thrown himself into the new religion with unparalled fervour and devotion. But the capital, Thebes, was not an appropriate place in which to serve his god with perfect zeal. Here, everything had been for ages far too closely connected with the cult of Amon; and here, in spite of all his efforts, the new doctrine made but slow headway. The Pharaoh, therefore, resolved to leave Thebes with his whole court, and found a new residence in the sacred district of el-Amarna, which had been dedicated to Aton. In the sixth year of his reign he made his brilliant entry into the "Horizon of the solar luminary."

But what, you will probably ask me, was the subject of the new Egyptian state-religion, the

"doctrine," to which the king had devoted himself with such fervour, and which he sought to spread over the land by all the means in his power? The answer to this question is given by the great hymn, perhaps composed by the king himself, in which "*Aton*" is extolled as the only God, the creator of all life, the orderer and upholder of the world[1]:

"Beautiful is thy brightness," it runs, "on the horizon of the heavens, thou living sun that didst live before all else. When thou risest on the eastern horizon, thou fillest the whole land with thy beauty. Thou art fair, and great, and bright, and lifted up above the earth. Thy rays encompass the world and all that thou hast made."

The hymn goes on to describe how in the night, when the sun has vanished and "descended beneath the horizon of the West," men are seized with deep slumber, and only the wild beasts that are man's enemies, lions and serpents, come forth from their lairs.

But what a difference,

"when the land is bright, when thou risest upon the horizon, when thou sendest abroad thy rays; then the world is glad, men awake and stand up, for thou hast raised them. They wash their limbs and put on their garments, and their arms are lifted up in prayer, when thou risest. Then all beasts are at rest in their pastures,

[1] *Cf.* F. Henry Breasted, *De hymnis in Solem sub rege Amenophide IV. conceptis* (Berlin, 1894).

trees and herbs are green, the birds flutter from their nests, and their wings praise thee. The lambs leap in the meadows, all insects and all things that fly are alive when *thou* shinest upon them."

So, too, the sun wakes life in the waters: "the ships sail to and fro, to North and South; the fishes swim before thee in the river, and thy beams pierce to the midst of the sea." All men and animals were created by the sun: "he quickens the child in his mother's womb," and "when the child comes forth into the world on the day of his birth, then thou openest his mouth so that he speaketh." It is Aton again, that

"giveth the breath of life to the chick piping in his broken egg-shell. . . . How manifold are the things which thou hast made! According to thine own wish hast thou created the earth, with man and all cattle and all small creatures, with all things that go upon feet or fly in the air, the land of Syria and the land of Ethiopia, besides the land of Egypt. Thou settest each thing in his place, thou satisfiest his needs. The tongues of men are divers in speech, and their outward favour differeth in colour. So didst thou divide all peoples."

As Aton created men, so, too, does he nourish them; foreigners by the rain, the Egyptians by the Nile, the "heavenly Nile." The god is praised, lastly, because he "created the seasons," the winter cold and the summer heat:

"Thou madest the distant heaven, to shine therein,

and to behold all thou hast created. Thou art the only one ; thou shinest in thine own likeness as the living ball of the sun, thou risest and sendest forth thy beams ; cities and villages, the tribes of the Bedouins, and the rivers, all eyes look upon thee when thou, the sun, art above the earth by day."

This hymn is one of the most beautiful of those preserved to us from Egyptian literature; but it contains no particularly original thoughts. Most of it might have stood very well in an old orthodox hymn to the sun, composed before the Reformation. The important dogma in the new faith is that which maintains Aton to be the creator, orderer, and governor of the whole world and not of Egypt alone. He was the King of the All ; and this attribute was expressed in a naïve fashion by enclosing his name, like that of an earthly Pharaoh, in an oval ring, and by the addition of a number of epithets, such as "the living globe of the sun, the lord of all which the globe of the sun compasses, who illuminates Egypt, the lord of the sun's rays."

Above all, the "doctrine" made a clean sweep of polytheistic ideas, and sought to establish in their stead practically a pure, if somewhat crudely material monotheism. But what was expelled by one door was readmitted by another; the king himself was raised to the rank of a god, his cult was set up

in different places, and priests appointed for his worship. Moreover, the new faith, even after its recognition as the religion of the state, was not exempt from doctrinal change. This appeared in the fact that the name of Aton was varied; he received a still stranger title than before, which ran as follows: "Rē [the sun] lives, the prince of the two horizons, he who exults on the horizon, in his name 'Flame that comes from the sun.'"

Another point at which the new doctrine broke with tradition was the external form in which the god was conceived. At the beginning of the Reformation, during the early years of the reign of Amenophis IV., Aton, as I have already mentioned, was still represented in the same manner as the old Rē-Horus; but in the monotheistic state-religion every personal representation of the deity was rejected, every image or likeness of a god removed. Worship was paid solely to the visible, light-giving sun. This is portrayed as a round disc, from which proceeded long rays, ending in hands which hold out the symbols of life to the king and his family as the representatives of humanity.[1]

No energetic resistance seems to have been

[1] *Cf.* Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, iii., pp. 91–110; Maspero, *Hist. anc.*, ii., p. 328; Steindorff, *Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs*, pp. 146, 156, 157.

opposed to the introduction of the new state-religion in any part of the country. At any rate we do not hear of any insurrectionary movement directed against the king. The majority of the local officials bowed to the Pharaoh's commands; those who did not were relieved of their posts, possibly even executed.

But hardly had Amenophis passed to his rest, after a reign of about eighteen years, when the storm burst on what had been his religious life-work. The adherents of the old faith, the Theban priests of Amon at their head, put forth their whole strength in the effort to restore the banished gods, to open the old temples once more to the people, and regain possession of their sequestrated property. Amenophis's son-in-law and successor—the heretic king had left no son behind him—sought to resist the Counter-reformation, but was quickly hurled from the throne. His successor and brother-in-law, Tut-enkh-aton, had the shrewdness to see that the Aton-doctrine could not be maintained as the religion of the State, and that the only means of retaining his throne was to make peace with the adherents of the old faith. He restored the liberty of worshipping the ancient gods, and publicly professed his devotion to Amon, the god but recently so persecuted.

As Amenophis had once changed his name,

because it contained the prohibited word "Amon," so the new king altered his own name, which was compounded with "Aton." Henceforth he was known as "Tut-enkh-Amon," "the living image of Amon." Yielding to the pressure of circumstances, the new Pharaoh abandoned his residence at el-Amarna, and retransferred his court to the old capital Thebes. But it was reserved for King Haremhab, the second successor of Tut-enkh-Amon, to abolish entirely the state-religion of Amenophis IV. The temple of Aton, which remained standing under the immediate successors of the heretic king, was razed and the ground made smooth where it had been. Throughout the country an onslaught was made on the memory of the sun-worshipper, of his family, and of his god; their names and portraits were destroyed wherever they could be laid hold of.[1]

Orthodoxy thus gained a complete victory; but the religious life which had put forth its fairest flower in the new "doctrine" of Amenophis IV. was thereby destroyed, and all further development of the faith checked. Amon-Rē was once more the uncontested lord of the Egyptian gods; and his zealous priests,

[1] As to the history of the heretic kings *cf.* principally Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens*, p. 260 *ff;* Maspero, *Hist. anc.*, ii., p. 316 *ff;* Steindorff, *Blütezeit*, p. 140 *ff.*

continuing the syncretism of the older theology, were at pains to represent him as the "one and only god, whose like nowhere exists." The tendency of the priestly speculations of the reactionary epoch is exhibited to us by a hymn dedicated to Amon.[1] I should like to give you a sample or two, taken from the abundance of its somewhat inflated verse:

"Praise be to thee"—so it begins—"Amon-Rē, thou bull that art in Heliopolis; lord of Karnak, ... thou Ancient One of the heavens, and most ancient upon earth, lord of law, father of the gods . . . . who hast made the higher and the lower (meaning perhaps the celestial bodies and mankind), and who givest light to the world, who makest a prosperous voyage through the heavens, thou blessed King Rē, supreme over the world, thou that art rich in power, full of strength. . . . Praise be to thee, thou creator of the gods, thou that didst lift up the heavens and tread down the earth. . . . Thou lord of eternity, that didst create the eternal . . . . thou comely king that art crowned with a white crown, thou lord of splendour that createst light, to whom the (very) gods vouchsafe praise. Praise be to thee, Rē, lord of right, whose holiness is hidden, thou lord of the gods; thou art Kheperi in thy vessel; at thy command the gods arose; thou art Atum that didst create mankind. Thou only art he that created whatsoever is; men came forth from thine eye, and the gods from out of thy

[1] *Papyrus in Cairo* (Bulak), No. 17, published by Mariette; *Papyrus de Boulag*, ii., pl. 11 *ff.*; *cf.* Grébaut, *Hymne à Ammon-Ra* (Paris, 1874); Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 111–115.

mouth. Thou art he that did create green herbs for the cattle and fruit-bearing trees for men; who giveth a livelihood to the fishes in the river and the birds under the heavens, who lendeth breath to the creature that is still within the egg, and nourisheth the son of the worm; that giveth life to the flies as to the worms and the fleas; he provideth that which the mice have need-of in their holes. . . . Praised be thou that didst create all this. Thou king, supreme among gods, we worship thee because thou didst make us, we extol thee because thou hast fashioned us; we bless thee because thou dwellest among us."

In all the phrases, as you doubtless perceive, there is manifest a distinct strain of *monotheistic* sentiment. But it is only sentiment; for in practice the worship of the ancient gods was clung to more firmly than ever, while, by the side of Amon, Rē-Horus of Heliopolis and Ptah of Memphis retained their high place in the Egyptian Pantheon and were extolled in hymns similar to this.

It is true that in addition to those already named, only one other ancient Egyptian deity, Set, received special honour within a short period, under the rule of the Ramessidæ. Originally the local god of Ombos in Upper Egypt, he had become, as far back as the primitive age, the patron of the southern kingdom. He had been received into the "Great Ennead" of Heliopolis, and played an important part in the Osiris-myth. His worship,

moreover, had become domiciled in the eastern Delta, especially in the cities of Tanis and Auaris. He had thus become patron of Eastern Egypt, and, crossing the border, had taken under his protection the Syrian dominions of the Pharaoh. At Auaris, where the Hyksos-kings had set up their court after their conquest of Egypt, he had also become the patron of the barbarians, and again the opponent of Rē-Horus, who stretched a protecting hand over the Egyptians and led them to battle against the national foe. Set became, in fact, identified with Baal, the protector of the Syrian tribes and cities. But still he was and remained an Egyptian divinity, and continued to receive worship in his ancient cities. The kings of Dynasty XIX., on grounds we are now unable to determine with any certainty, even regarded him as their ancestor, and numerous members of their family derived their names from him—*e. g.*, Sethos, "he who belongs to Set," and Setnakht, "Set is strong." But when Ramses II. fixed his residence temporarily on the eastern frontier of Egypt, at Tanis (the biblical Zoan), the renown of Set, who was worshipped in that city, was even further increased; he became one of the chief gods, by the side of Amon, Rē-Horus and Ptah, while in the place of his old shrine a new and magnificent temple was built for him,

the mighty ruins of which still attest its former splendour.

In the period of the New Kingdom, when Egypt was in closer relation with the neighbouring lands of Western Asia, many foreign deities found an entrance and a hospitable reception not only from barbarians settled in Egypt but also from the strictly orthodox Egyptians themselves. This was especially the case with the Baalim, who were identified with Set and worshipped in the form of the same monstrous beasts as he was; further, there was Astarte, who, like the Babylonian deity, was represented as a naked woman standing upon her sacred animal, the lion, or else with a lioness's head, according to the Egyptian fashion. We find the warlike Reshep, adorned with helmet and lance, as also the urban goddess, Kadesh, who is addressed, like the Egyptian Hathor, as "Lady of the heavens," "Ruler of all gods," as the "Eye of the Sun-god," as the "Daughter of Rē and beloved of the Sun-god." Anat, the Syrian goddess of war, also won for herself a place in the Egyptian temples, and acquired such popularity that Ramses II. named after her his favourite daughter, Bint-Anat, "daughter of Anat."

But in the first millenium before Christ, when the friendly relations of Egypt to Syria and Palestine

were gradually falling off, Set, too, declined in reputation, as being the patron of the Asiatics, and the Egyptians began to regard him solely as the protector of their enemies. Not only so, but the priests gave practical effect to the position which Set occupied in the Osiris-legend, and inclined to regard him more and more as the incarnation of all evil. He had slain Osiris and sustained a severe contest with the avenger Horus. He thus became the adversary of the sun-god and the representative of darkness, the lord of the drought and the desert which destroy all life; he became the enemy of all good, the Satan among the gods of Egypt. The end of the process was that Set was expelled from the Pantheon, his cult abolished, his name and his portraits exterminated wherever found. When the Greeks learned of him they compared him to Typhon, the mythical adversary of Zeus, who was overwhelmed by a thunderbolt after a fierce struggle and hurled down to Tartarus.

The ejection of Set was the last sign of strong life given by the dying Egyptian religion. With the decay of the chief city, Thebes, which was accomplished slowly but continuously after the expulsion of the Ethiopian kings, the reputation of Amon-Rē declined more and more. The residence of the Pharaohs, and with it the centre of gravity of the realm,

was shifted northwards, with the result that the local gods worshipped in the Delta, Neit of Sais, Bubastis, Anubis, more especially Osiris and his family, and Harpokrates, gained greater and greater acceptance.

The advance of Greek culture introduced the worship of *heroes*. Ancient sages to whose graves pilgrimages had been made since the earliest days, and who had been revered as the Arabs of to-day revere their pious sheikhs, were received among the number of the national deities. Thus Amenothes the son of Hapu, the famous architect of the third Amenophis, became a demi-god and was worshipped in several temples of the western Thebes; so, too, was deified the holy Imhotep. This man, a contemporary of the ancient king Zoser, had also been celebrated as an architect; it was believed that he had been the possessor of great knowledge and had especially distinguished himself in the art of healing. His tomb, which was in the neighbourhood of the sepulchral pyramid of his king, close to the step-pyramid of Sakkara, had been already the goal of pilgrims who there sought healing for their diseases. A temple was now built there, and divine rites instituted in honour of the saint. Imhotep was no mere deceased mortal who received sacrifices as did also other dead men; he had become a god. The priests

pronounced him a son of Ptah, and the Greeks identified him, in accordance with his attributes, with their god of healing, Asklepios. His worship spread from Memphis over the whole land; and even in the distant island of Philæ, situated on the Nubian frontier, a chapel was erected to Imhotep by Ptolemy Philadelphus.[1]

But all Egyptian gods were thrown into the shade by the new god, Serapis (better called Sarapis), whom the first Ptolemy imported into the Nile valley with mystic solemnity. A vision in a dream, so it was reported, had caused Ptolemy Soter to have the great god Zeus-Hades carried away from Sinope on the Black Sea. In the presence of Greek and Egyptian theologians, among whom was also Manetho, the historian of Egyptian antiquity, the foreign god was escorted into Alexandria and acknowledged as Serapis. Who he really was no one has been able to discover. At any rate the king's wish was fulfilled, that the new god should be an object of worship to the Græco-Egyptian world, before whom all his subjects might bow with equal reverence. The Greeks saw in him the greatest god of the universe, uniting in his own person Zeus, the god of heaven, Helios, the sun-god, and Hades, the lord of the under world. The

[1] *Cf.* Sethe, *Imhotep der Asklepios der Aegypten ein vergötterter Mensch aus der Zeit des Koenigs Doser* (Leipzig, 1902).

Egyptians, on the other hand, were led by a similarity of names to connect him with a god of the dead worshipped in the necropolis of Memphis, the Apis-bull deified after death, the Osiris-Apis or Osorapis; and they believed that the new Serapis was none other than their old Osorapis.[1]

The cult of Serapis found acceptance in Egypt with remarkable celerity. It was as if the dwellers in the Nile valley, both Greeks and Egyptians, had despaired of the old gods and now yearned for a new heavenly power. Serapis became the national god of Græco-Roman Egypt. But he, too, failed to infuse new religious life into the people. The harvest was ripe for the sickle. When in the reign of Theodosius the Great, the first Christian Emperor, the Serapis temple at Alexandria sank into ruin, when the image of the great god—smitten by a soldier's battle-axe—fell with a crash to the ground, then, too, Egyptian paganism received its death blow. *The Egyptian religion fell to pieces with Serapis.*

[1] *Cf.* Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens*, p. 401 *f.*; Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, p. 56 *ff.*; Wilcken in the *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, iii., pp. 249–251.

LECTURE III.

Temples and Ceremonies.

"THE Egyptians are exceedingly god-fearing, more than all other peoples." Such is the judgment passed by Herodotus in the fifth century before Christ on the religious character of the inhabitants of the Nile valley.[1] And that which was true in this late age was equally true in the earlier periods of Egyptian history. In all ages the Egyptian was animated by a lively sense of religion. It was always his zealous endeavour to fulfill the will of his god, to pay him due reverence, and to commit no sacrilege in his sanctuary.

One room of an Egyptian house would contain a small chapel with an image or likeness of the god, where the family would offer prayer and sacrifice. Outside in the streets there would stand little shrines; in the fields there would be altars on which the husbandman would deposit his offerings. Ancient Egypt probably presented an aspect like that of a Catholic country in modern Europe, in

[1] Herodotus, ii., 37.

which images of saints and chapels meet us at every step. The minor centres of worship, it is true, have left very few relics that have been preserved down to the present time; only the great temples are represented by ruins of any considerable extent.

The oldest form of the Egyptian temple, as it was in the prehistoric age, is to be ascertained only from small hieroglyphic pictures. According to these, it consisted in a little hut, built of wood or lattice-work. Two large poles were erected before the entrance, and over the door two staves were placed obliquely for ornament. The holy place was surrounded by a palisade which prevented unauthorised persons from entering.[1]

By the time of the Old Kingdom the temple had already advanced beyond this primitive form. The fabric was of bricks or of still more solid material, limestone or even granite; the interior was adorned with colonnades and the walls sculptured in relief. It must be admitted that we are acquainted with only one kind of temple belonging to this period, and that differing considerably in its arrangement from the usual type.[2] I mean the remarkable temples of the Sun which were erected by the kings of

[1] Cp. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 279, 280.

[2] I omit here the Pyramid-temples, which were devoted to the cult of the dead Pharaohs in the Old Empire; on these compare Lecture IV.

the Fifth Dynasty in the necropolis of Abusir, about ten miles to the south of the great Pyramids of Ghizeh.[1] One of them, that built by King Newoserrē, was excavated in the years 1898–1901, and all its spaces exposed to view. A gently rising causeway led from the metropolis in the valley up to the low eminence on which the sanctuary stood. A magnificent gateway afforded entrance to a large open court, in which a huge obelisk stood on a supporting structure disguised by handsome blocks of red granite. In front of it was a gigantic altar, composed of great blocks of alabaster. To the right of the entrance a covered passage led to the treasure-chambers of the temple, in which the utensils employed in worship and other valuables were preserved. To the left, a corresponding passage followed the southern wall, then, bending northwards, led to the substructure of the obelisk, and there, winding like a spiral staircase, ascended to a platform in the open. At the foot of the obelisk was a small chapel, adorned with graceful sculptures in relief. All of these represented the various ceremonies performed on the occasion of the king's Jubilee, and among them the laying of the foundation-stone of the Sun-temple

[1] Cp. *Zeitschrift für aegypt. Sprache und Altertumskunde*, vol. xxxvii. (1899), p. 1 *ff.*; vol. xxxviii. (1900), p. 94 *ff.*; vol. xxxix. (1901), p. 91 *ff.*

played a great part. The chapel itself, as has been conjectured with great probability, was the vestry used by the Pharaoh at his Jubilee, in which he was adorned with the different festive-garments.

Of the great sanctuaries of the Middle Kingdom, built in the first half of the second millennium before Christ in the various chief cities of the land, Thebes, Koptos, Medinet-el-Fayoum, Bubastis, and Tanis, none has been preserved entire; they were mostly destroyed in the troubled times of the Hyksos rule, and what remained of them was used over again in building new temples. So much, however, is clear, namely, that in their construction the plan followed by the later sanctuaries had already been adopted. Let us now endeavour to realise to ourselves what this type was.[1]

A paved road bordered by Sphinxes or other recumbent animal figures led through the ancient city to the holy precinct, the Temenos, which was enclosed by a wall of bricks. Entrance was afforded by a stone gateway with a fluted projection bearing the symbol of the winged sun. Passing through, we have before us a great pylon, a huge gate flanked by

[1] Cp. the plan of the small temple of Ramses III. or the temple of Khons, built by the same king in Karnak; Baedeker's *Egypt*, 5th edition, p. 247 and p. 243 *ff*.

two towers, placed before the narrow frontage of the temple. Within, we see first a wide, open court, with colonnades on several of its sides. In the midst of it is the great altar, round which the faithful gather on days of festival. They were not allowed to penetrate further into the temple. Adjoining this columned court, in the direction of the long axis of the building, is the temple proper, standing on an artificial platform. It must have contained at least three main spaces. First was an ante-chamber or *πρόναος*, with a roof supported by columns; beyond that the hypostyle or hall of columns. Generally this took the form of a triple basilica, with a lofty central nave supported by columns and two lower naves on each side. From it access was gained to the Holy of Holies, the true dwelling place of the godhead. This consisted, as a rule, of three chapels placed side by side. The middle one housed the image of the chief god—at Thebes, for example, that of Amon. In the other two the accessory deities—at Thebes Mut and the moon-god Khons—found a resting-place.

The whole design of the temples resembled that of an ancient Egyptian house occupied by a private citizen.[1] This, too, was divided into three parts lying one behind another: a reception-space

[1] Herodotus, ii., 153.

analogous to the πρόναος, a banqueting hall, and the private apartment of the householder. In view of this similiarity the Egyptians were fully entitled to designate the temple as the "House of the God." But just as an Egyptian of rank would hardly have been content with three rooms, so the god, as a rule, was allowed more chambers in his temple than those I have described. Thus the hall of columns was commonly separated from the Holy of Holies by additional halls; while smaller rooms, often to the number of dozens, were built against its sides. More particularly, the later temples contained a special sanctuary placed before the Holy of Holies. In it was preserved the sacred boat, within which was a special image of the god.

Besides these temples of simple design there were others of greater size and complexity. I need only mention those of Luxor and Karnak, which cannot be made to conform to the type which I have described. The singularity of their plan may be explained by the fact that they were not constructed from a single design, but owed their form to the projects of several different architects. Each of these wished to build himself a specially magnificent monument in the form of an addition to the temple, and, in doing so, to surpass the work of his predecessors. In this manner the temple at Karnak acquired

no fewer than five gateways, one behind another, while the temple at Luxor was provided with as many as three great courts.

The sacred animal, in which the deity had his earthly residence, was also, as a rule, lodged in a special house near the temple. Thus Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis, had his abode near the temple of Ptah, of whom he was the incarnation. In a later age this abode was rebuilt for him by King Psammetichus, and consisted of an open court surrounded by a hall. Its roof was supported by pillars against which stood statues of kings and gods; while the walls, just as in the case of a temple, were adorned with paintings and reliefs. Similarly, in the city of Arsinoë, in the district of the Fayoum, there was a lake close by the temple of the god Sobek in which the sacred animal, the crocodile, was kept.

"It was fed," so we are told by the Roman traveller Strabo, who visited Egypt in the reign of Augustus, "on bread, meat, and wine, brought by the strangers who came to see it. Our host accompanied us to the lake, taking with him a small cake from his meal, with some roast meat and a flask of wine. We found the animal lying on the bank; the priests came forward, and while one of them held his mouth open another pushed in the cake, then the meat, and poured the wine after them. The crocodile then jumped into the lake and swam to the opposite bank. Another stranger now appeared bear-

ing a similar gift. The priests took it from his hands, ran round the lake and fed the animal as before." [1]

Outside the house of the god proper, but within the large walled-in temple-precinct, there would also be found several chapels, the priests' lodgings, extensive farm-buildings, granaries, stalls, gardens, and ponds, so that the whole may well have presented the aspect of a small city.

All the smooth surfaces in an Egyptian temple, the masonry of the pylon, the walls of the courts, the halls and the other enclosures devoted to worship, were from the earliest days covered with pictorial representations and hieroglyphic inscriptions. The outer walls, those of the pylon and the courts, those parts of the sanctuary, that is to say, which were exposed to the profane gaze of the multitude, were employed for the glorification of things secular: the great deeds of the King in battle against his enemies, great festivals, or other important events of his reign. Thus in the temple of Deir-el-Bahri, at Thebes, we find immortalised on the wall of one of the courts that trading expedition which in the time of Queen Hatshepsowet travelled to Punt, the distant, legend-encircled land of frankincense, and returned to the chief city of the empire laden with all manner of marvellous things. Here everything was designed

[1] Strabo, xvii., 1, 38.

to give the beholder a conception of the might and majesty of the Pharaoh.

On the other hand, the inner walls of the temple proper were devoted to the representation of the sacred ceremonies which were performed in the edifice. We there see the king in festive-garb, standing before the god, to whom he offers incense, pours out water, or brings gifts of wine, milk, cakes, and garlands of flowers. In return the god presents him with life, the most precious of all gifts, which is symbolised by a hieroglyphic signifying "life." Other representations show us Pharaoh being crowned by the guardian gods of the South and the North, or the chief god of the temple is inscribing his name on the leaves of a sacred sycamore, in order to insure the perpetual continuance of his government. Many of these delineations have a purely decorative purpose; others, however, relate to the rites proper to the particular portion of the temple in which they are found. In the reception-hall, for example, we frequently see the king being sprinkled with holy water by the gods Horus and Thout, after which he is conducted into the divine presence, purified from the dust of every-day life. Or we see him in the Holy of Holies, performing all manner of ceremonies before the sacred boat of the divinity.

It must be confessed that there is little variety in these delineations, especially in the temples of the later period, and the accompanying inscriptions are no less tedious in their monotony. These reproduce the various speeches addressed by the king to the god and by the god to the king. The Pharaoh informs the god a hundred times that he has brought him incense or loaves or wine; and the god replies with similar iteration that he will bestow on the Pharaoh "all life, all security, all continuance, all health, and all gladness of heart," or that he will "prolong his years everlastingly and give him sovereignty over a rejoicing world."

Of the sacred utensils used in divine worship, the golden pitchers and goblets, the receptacles for the prayer and service books, the vessels for holding incense, and so on, but little has been preserved to us. Vast as was the number of these articles kept in the great sanctuaries of the country, mostly as the gift of the Pharaohs, they have all fallen a welcome prey to invaders and temple-robbers during the great revolutions which have convulsed the land. The same fate has visited the most valuable possession of the temples, the sacred bark with the divine image. For where this image was not a simple primitive fetish, it was wrought out of gold, silver, or gilded bronze; while the sacred boat, in which the god was borne in

solemn processions, was fabricated of costly materials and adorned with gold, silver, or precious stones.

The architectural and sculptural adornments of the temples are represented by more ample remains; in many places the slender obelisks, raised, it would appear, by the kings on the jubilee of their reign, still stand before the entrance gateway; there, too, as also in the courts and halls, the stone statues of the gods and Pharaohs are still erect and imposing.[1]

Any one who reads the inscriptions on these monuments, or even regards the pictures and reliefs on the temple walls, may easily derive the impression that the sanctuary was built solely for the greater glory of the Pharaoh, and that he was the only man to whom any familiar intercourse with the gods was granted. In theory it probably was so; the king alone had the right to serve the god without intermediary, to behold him and speak with him. But in practice it was generally otherwise. It is only on rare occasions that we hear of such exclusive rights being reserved for himself by a ruler. When the Ethiopian king, Piankhi, marched from the south with his victorious army into the heart of Egypt about the middle of the eighth century, he came to Heliopolis, among other places, and paid his formal visit to the celebrated sanctuary of the sun-god.

[1] *E. g.*, in the temple of Luxor; *cf.* Baedeker, p. 239.

"He ascended the steps to behold the Sun-god in the Holy of Holies. The King stood there alone; he unsealed the bolt, opened the folding doors, and beheld his father Rē [the Sun-god] in the glorious Holy of Holies; he beheld, also, the morning bark of Rē and the evening bark of Atum. Then he closed the folding doors again, laid clay thereon, and sealed it with his royal seal. Thereupon he gave command to the priests: 'I have [laid hereon] my seal, and of all the men that shall be no-one of the other kings shall enter.'"[1]

As a rule the priests also held converse with the god, being, as it were, the king's representatives. It was their task to care for the god's needs, to clothe him, to rouge him, to place his adornments upon him, to cleanse his private apartment, the Holy of Holies, and perfume it with incense. And if at the royal court all intercourse with the earthly sovereign was regulated by the strictest ceremonial, how much stricter must have been the rules observed in the divine presence! A fixed ritual governed the ceremonies and formulæ of greeting with which it was necessary to approach and serve the deity. There were no fewer than sixty rites which the priests of the Theban Amon were required to perform; the hierophants of Osiris at Abydos had easier duties, for here the number of separate rites did not exceed thirty-six. During the performance

[1] Inscription of Piankhi, l., 103 *ff.*

of each ceremony a particular formula was required to be recited, the exact knowledge of which was indispensable; not infrequently it was inscribed on the temple wall itself, and the priest with his knowledge of hieroglyphics might read it thence.

When, for example, the priest entered the hall of columns, censer in hand, at Abydos, it was his duty to repeat the following words:

"I come out before thee, thou great one, having first cleansed myself;
"When I passed by the goddess Tefnut she cleansed me. . . .
"I am a prophet, and the son of a prophet of this temple; . . .
"I am a prophet, and come to do that which ought to be done, but I come not to do that which ought not to be done."

After that, when the priest arrives at the chapel itself where the god has his seat, he must first of all break the clay-seal with which the bolt is secured, and, as he does so, recite a sentence:

"The clay is broken and the seal destroyed that this door may be opened, and all the evil that is upon me I thus throw to the ground."

To the accompaniment of similar speeches the door is opened, the priest greets the uræus-serpent which guards the god, and now sets foot in the Holy

of Holies. He approaches the divine image and commences its toilet, which will have differed little from that of a mortal man. First, the god is disrobed; every act accompanied, of course, by the appointed sentence. The old rouge is removed and the garments taken off. The priest then clothes the god in clean raiment, lays on fresh rouge, and adds all manner of adornments. When the god is once more in perfect trim, the priest leaves the apartment and reseals the door. And this divine toilet was gone through every morning with the same circumstantiality! It was much the same with the daily cleansing and fumigation of the chapel.'

But clothing and lodging were not the only needs of the god for which provision had to be made; above everything he must be kept supplied with food and drink. This alimentary problem occupied at all times a great (perhaps the greatest) space in the service of the god. Originally it was no doubt solved by the pious gifts of private persons, who brought to the god the first fruits of their fields and gardens, together with what was best in the products of their houses. But, later, these private gifts were thrown into the shade by the rich offerings which came from the state, that is, from the king,

[1] Cp. Mariette, *Abydos*, i., 34 *ff;* Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 273 *ff*.

to the temples throughout the land. Vast quantities of incense, of flowers for the adornment of the altars, of honey, loaves, cakes, cattle, poultry (more especially geese), beer, and wine were employed in this manner. Of all this the smallest portion, it is true, was employed for the benefit of the god himself, in the different incense and drink offerings. The slaughtered animals were no doubt laid upon the altar in the temple court, but they were not then consumed by fire as burnt-offerings, in the manner common among other peoples. The greater part of the food and drink that came to the temples was used rather for the sustenance of the priests and the lower temple officials. Besides, out of the mass of offerings which were received on the great festivals of the year, a large part was employed in the entertainment of visitors to the temple. The divinity, whose house the sanctuary was, extended to his guests the same friendly hospitality as a mortal householder in his own home.

"Of feasts there were many, in every year, in every temple."[1] Herodotus, in a later age, can still report that the Egyptians assemble together to keep festival, not once, but frequently, in the course of a year.[1] On these occasions festival plays were generally enacted. As in the mediæval mysteries or the passion plays of to-day, the priests gave representations of

[1] Herodotus, ii., 59.

episodes in the history of the god in whose honour the feast was held. Thus at Abydos the fortunes of Osiris were brought on the stage; the god was escorted from his temple in the city to his grave out in the desert, and there the great battle in which the god had smitten his enemies was set forth by priests and people in a living reproduction.[1]

There were processions, also, in which one god solemnly visited another in his temple, and there, as a matter of course, was entertained, along with his escort, with meat and cakes. Among these festivals there are some of which we learn something from the delineations on the temple walls; for example, the great sacrificial feast in honour of the old harvest-god, Min, was celebrated at the same time as the king's coronation with great pomp.[2]

Concerning a few feasts we have more exact information, and we know how they were kept in a later age in the cities of Lower Egypt, Bubastis, Busiris, Sais, Buto, and other places, in honour of the respective local divinities.[3] One of the most popular of them was that held in honour of Bastet at Bubastis in the Delta. Thither, as Herodotus[4] tells us, the

[1] Cp. Heinrich Schaefer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos unter König Sesostris III.* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 20 *ff.*

[2] Lepsius, *Denkm.*, iii., 162–164, 212, 213; Wilkinson, *Costumes and Manners*, iii., pl. xl. Cp. Erman, *Life*, p. 65 *ff.*

[3] Herodotus, ii., 59–64.

[4] Herodotus, ii., 60.

participants, men and women, came in boats, even from great distances. It was an exceedingly jovial feast, and the pilgrims began having a good time while still on the way. The sounds of song and music floated over the waters. The women had rattles, the men played flutes, others sang or kept time by clapping their hands. The party would land at villages which they passed and play all manner of pranks. When at length the goal, Bubastis, was reached, great sacrifices would be offered, and "at this feast more wine went than throughout the rest of the year." No fewer than 700,000 persons are said to have taken part in one of these feasts, and, though this number may be exaggerated, Bubastis certainly harboured within its walls on such festal days as many visitors as, say, the modern Egyptian town of Tanta does at the present time on the occasion of the yearly market coupled with the birthday feast of its saint.

There were numerous hymns and spiritual songs in which the gods were extolled by priests and people. Many of them breathe sincere religious feeling, and exhibit a poetic fervour which awakes a response even in the modern reader; in most, however, the deeper meaning is overborne by a quite intolerable flood of continually recurring phrases. In my second lecture I have already quoted to you

samples from this branch of literature; perhaps you will be disposed to listen to a few more and form an idea for yourselves of the form and contents of these poems.

To begin with, I will translate to you some lines from a hymn to the god Thout, the Greek Hermes, in which he is praised first as the god of the moon, then as the god of scholars and as a judge[1]:

"I come to thee, thou bull among the stars,
Thout, thou moon that art in heaven:
Thou art in heaven, yet thy splendour rests upon the earth,
Thy ray lighteth Egypt.
Praised be thou, thou lord of the hieroglyphs,
Thou judge in heaven and upon earth;
Thou who givest words and writing,
Who bestowest goods and fillest houses,
Who teachest the knowledge of the gods, what is due to them."

Again there is beauty of expression and truth of feeling in a prayer which is addressed to Amon-Rē, the king of the gods, and which extols him as the great pantheistic deity[2]:

"O my God, Lord of the gods, Amon-Rē of Thebes,
Stretch out thy hand to me, save me;
Rise up for me [as the sun, that is], revive me.

[1] Cp. *Zeitschrift für ägypt. Sprache*, 1895, p. 21.

[2] Inscription on a wooden statue in the Berlin Museum; cp. *Ausführliches Verzischuis der aegyptischen Altertünner*, 2d ed., p. 142, 143 (No. 6910).

Thou art the one god that hath no equal,
The sun that riseth in the heavens,
[The god] Atum, who created man.
Thou hearest the prayer of him that calleth upon thee,
Thou deliverest man from the hand of the mighty . . .
Thou givest breath to that which is still in the egg, to men and to birds ;
Thou makest that whereof the mice have need in their holes, and the worms and the fleas."

Many of these phrases are specially applicable to the sun-god, and resemble those in the great hymn of the heretic king of which you heard in my last lecture.

In the earliest times the functions of religion were not yet the exclusive concern of a special priesthood, but were the common property of the whole people. It is true that each temple had its staff of officials who offered sacrifices and permanently attended to the service of the god ; at the same time every person of rank, in addition to his secular calling, was invested with some religious office. These sacerdotal functions were often connected with the civil office of the man who performed them ; judges, for example, were frequently also priests of Maat, the goddess of justice, and the local princes were often at the same time the high priests of the guardian gods who protected their respective districts.

The statement of Herodotus[1] that no woman could hold the priestly office in the service of either a god or a goddess is certainly not true of the earliest period of Egyptian history. Women were then often employed in the temples, and we find frequent mention of priestesses, more especially in connection with the worship of goddesses, such as Hathor and Neit.

Under the Middle Kingdom the number of professed priests was still small relatively to the lay element. Often there were only two of them, and at most they hardly exceeded five. In addition to these there were naturally various minor ecclesiastics, doorkeepers, watchmen, and workmen of all kinds. In certain temples the official priesthood included the "high priest," or, as he is called in Egyptian, "the prefect of the prophets." But as a rule this office was filled by a layman, who, by an old custom, was the governor of the district. The latter thus possessed not only the highest legal and administrative power in his nome, but was also ecclesiastically supreme; it was his duty to attend to the interests of religion within his jurisdiction, and this addition to his functions no doubt brought him not only honour but considerable pecuniary advantages as well. A functionary who was everywhere a member of the

[1] Herodotus, ii., 35.

professional priesthood was the "first priestly lector" of the temple. He was the trained theologian of the college, the one who possessed a knowledge of the sacred books, who could write, and, above all, read. His function was to read aloud from the sacred books; he knew the legends of the early ages and was well versed in the magic texts. What wonder if he, too, came to be looked upon as a great wizard, and if the earliest priest-lectors of the primitive age figured in popular tales as having wrought by their wisdom all manner of wonderful and mysterious things![1]

Besides the professional priesthood there also existed a numerous army of lay priests, or "hour-priests," as the Egyptians called them. These men were organised in a permanent corporation, affiliated to the temple. They were divided into four groups, the so-called *phylæ*, each one of which was on duty in the temple for a month at a time, so that every *phyle* had three turns in the course of a year. Each *phyle* had a special president, and further numbered in its ranks a scribe of the temple and a priest-reader, men, that is to say, who were "scientifically" educated, and who in civil life were doubtless reckoned among the "scribes" or officials.

While, however, the permanent priests enjoyed

[1] Cp. Erman, *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar.*, i., p. 21.

comfortable salaries, drawn from the manifold revenues of the temple, the lay priests received but slender remuneration. In fact they derived the major part of their income from their civil calling, and could therefore perform their religious functions in return for only a little pay. Thus we learn from account-books of the Middle Kingdom that out of certain revenues belonging to the temple, which were posted every month, only three portions went to the prefect of the lay-assistants, while the chief priest-lector, an official lower in rank but belonging to the professional priesthood, received double the amount, or six portions. Moreover, the latter received his share twelve times a year, while the lay brother, owing to the monthly rotation of the *phylæ*, was only paid three times in the same interval.[1]

We have now to mention a noteworthy fact in the history of civilisation, namely, that in the New Kingdom, which followed the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt, a period in which religion was winning for itself a greater and greater space in public life, the lay element was practically eliminated from the priestly office, and divine worship placed entirely in the charge of the professional priests. It is clear that the number of the latter must have been very considerably increased. Many tasks which had

[1] Cp. *Zeitschrift für äg. Spr.*, 1902 (40), p. 113 *ff.*

formerly been entrusted to the laity now devolved upon the regulars, and, concurrently with the unceasing accumulation of wealth by the sanctuaries, administrative functions required the employment of a great number of workers.

The variety and extent of the functions performed by individual priests may be clearly seen from the titles which they bore in addition to their principal designation.[1] Thus the "First Prophet," or the high priest of Amon, was at the same time the "Great Superintendent of Works," and in this capacity was required to take under his charge the extensive building operations connected with the temple, and "to provide splendour in his sanctuary." As "General of the Troops of the God" he commanded the military forces of the temple, like a mediæval archbishop, and as "Prefect of the Treasury" had under his control the by no means simple administration of the finances. Nor did his authority extend only over the Amon temple and its priesthood. He was also "Prefect of the Prophets of the Gods of Thebes" and "Prefect of the Prophets of all Gods of the South and the North." This can mean nothing else than that all the priests of the country were subordinate to him and that he was the supreme spiritual authority of the realm. Of this power he knew how to

[1] Cp. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 293 *ff.*

make good use; and it not infrequently happened that the offices of high priest in other temples, for example, that of the sun-god of Heliopolis, together with his special subordinate, members of the college of Amon, were filled in accordance with his choice. In this manner not only was great political power concentrated in the hands of the Theban priesthood, but great material advantages accrued to it as well, since the rich revenues of the old temple-lands flowed into the chest of a single body of priests. The danger thus occasioned to the State as a whole will become apparent to us later on.

By a happy accident we have fairly exact information on the steps by which the highest posts in the Egyptian hierarchy were attained.[1] Bekenkhons, who was high priest of the Theban Amon in the reign of Ramses II., that is, in the thirteenth century before Christ, tells us in his autobiography that as a boy he received a military education in one of the king's stables from his fifth to his fifteenth year. At the age of sixteen he entered the service of the most celebrated of all Egyptian temples, and here became, in the first place, a simple priest. At twenty he had worked through this lowest sacerdotal stage, and now rose to the next highest

[1] Cp. The inscription on the statue of Bekenkhons in the Glyptothek of Munich; Erman, *l. c.*, p. 294 *f.*

position, that of a "father of the god." For twelve years he performed the duties of this office; then, at the age of thirty-two, he was promoted to the ranks of the "prophets"; he was third prophet for fifteen years and second prophet for twelve. Finally, in the fifty-ninth year of his life, he was chosen by the royal favour to be high priest, to be "the first prophet of Amon and the prefect of the prophets of all gods." In this capacity he then showed himself "a good father to his subordinates; he educated their youth; he stretched out his hand to those who would have fallen, and succoured those who were in need."

Not every one, of course, followed so brilliant a career as our Bekenkhons. Just as has always happened in other parts of the world, most of those who devoted themselves to the priesthood, unless they possessed eminent gifts or enjoyed influential protection, must have spent their lives in the lower ecclesiastical positions, and been content to lead, in the shelter of the temple walls, a peaceful and comfortable existence free from everyday cares.

In the earlier period, when the professional priests were still few in number, they differed but little from the rest of mankind in their outward aspect. It was only the high priests of the great national sanctuaries that wore definite insignia as tokens of

their dignity. Thus the high priest of the god Ptah of Memphis wore a peculiar neck-ornament. This was adorned with curiously barbaric figures of animals, and its archaic style was enough to show that its origin was not in the historical period but in the distant primitive past. Among the priests there were some individuals who wore a panther skin hanging over their shoulders as part of their official dress.

When, in the time of the Middle Kingdom, the clergy came to be held in higher regard and the sacerdotal order increased in numbers and power, it became more and more their endeavour to clothe themselves in a manner indicating that they were a class apart from the great mass of mankind. At the same time they avoided what was fashionable in dress and remained faithful, like our modern clergy, to the simple costume of early days. For the sake of cleanliness the priests abstained from wearing wigs, and went about with shorn heads.

In a later age, when manners in general were regarded as of the utmost importance, and when it was sought to save the dying nationality by insistence on ancestral traditions, these externalities were observed by the priests with greater strictness than before.

"The priests"—so Herodotus bluntly tells us[1]—"shave the whole of their bodies once in three days in order

[1] Herodotus, ii., 37.

that no vermin or other unseemly creature may be found upon those who serve the gods ; the priests also wear only a linen garment and shoes of *byblos ;* other clothes or other shoes they are forbidden to put on. Twice a day they bathe in cold water and twice at night. And there are yet a thousand other customs to which they must conform."

Herodotus adds here that on the death of a high priest his son succeeded him in his office ; but while such hereditary transmission of office may have been fairly frequent, it was not the rule. At no period of Egyptian history was there a permanent sacerdotal caste in the sense that the son was *obliged* to be a priest like his father and could adopt no other profession. But the possibility was by no means excluded—and where in the world is the same state of things not to be observed?—that a father in the enjoyment of a lucrative sacerdotal office would see that his son or sons followed the same vocation ; and in this way it may well have happened that particular preferments remained for generations in the possession of a single family.

The satisfaction of the manifold needs of a god in the form of offerings, gigantic building operations, the maintenance of a numerous sacerdotal staff—all this was naturally impossible without resources of considerable magnitude. And in fact, the Pharaohs

made a practice from the earliest times of endowing the sanctuaries of their land with rich gifts, with estates and property of all kinds. Special occasion often arose for making donations of unusual magnitude; a vow had to be fulfilled, or the deity had extended some extraordinary favour to the king.

The oldest endowment of the kind about which we know anything is one dedicated by the primitive King Zoser to the patron of the cataract-district of Assuan, the god Khnum. We have a long document which relates the occasion of this endowment.[1] According to this, in the time of this Pharaoh's reign the Nile failed to rise for a period of seven years. In consequence, the severest distress prevailed in the land, and the king and his court were in the greatest anxiety. In these straits he turned to the wise Imhotep, the same who was afterwards deified as the god of healing, and questioned him upon the "birthplace of the Nile" and the god who bore rule there. The sage could not answer the king's questions on the spot; he requested leave of absence in order that he might consult the sacred books on the subject. He took his departure, but soon returned to the king and revealed to him "the hidden

[1] The inscription on the "Seven Years' Famine" on the Island of Sehêl; cp. Sethe, Dodekaschoinos (*Unters. z. Gesch. und Altertumsk. Aegyptens*, ii.), p. 19 *ff.*

wonders, the way to which had been shown to no king for unimaginable ages." He related that the Nile came to light in a city-district in the midst of the waters; the name of it was Elephantine, and it was on the frontier of lower Nubia. The water was named "The Two Holes," and this was the cradle of the Nile. Khnum reigned there as god; his temple opened towards the south-east. Worship was there paid also to the goddesses Satis and Anukis, the companions of Khnum, further to the Nile-god and the deities Show, Geb, Nut, Osiris, and Horus, as also to Isis and Nephthys. In the neighbourhood of that island, on the eastern bank, were massive mountains with all manner of exceedingly hard and precious minerals, which were in request for all building of temples in Upper and Lower Egypt, for the tombs of the kings, and for all kinds of statues—the allusion is naturally to the fine granite which has from the earliest times been quarried in the neighbourhood of Syene, on the east bank of the Nile. In addition, both on the western and on the eastern bank, as also on the islands in the river, there were to be found all kinds of precious stones and minerals, gold, silver, copper, iron, lapis lazuli, malachite, and so on.

When the king had heard this report of the wise Imhotep, his heart was glad and he caused a sacrifice to be offered "to the gods and the goddesses

of Elephantine, whose names have been named above."

In the night which followed these events the king had a dream: He saw the god Khnum standing before him. After he had done him reverence, the god revealed himself to him, and said:

"I am Khnum, thy creator and protector. I give to thee the mines and the minerals which throughout all ages have [never been discovered], and which have never been worked, for the building of temples and the repair of what has fallen into decay. For I am the creator who has created himself, the great primordial ocean that first arose, the Nile who rises at his pleasure, who directs every man in his work. . . . I have in my possession the two openings from which the Nile flows. I know the Nile. . . . I will cause the Nile to rise for thee; in no year shall it fail. The plantations shall bow beneath the fruit, and men shall rejoice more than in past times."

Upon these words the king awoke. Rejoicing in his heart over the promises of the god, he made a decree in which, out of gratitude to his father Khnum for that which he had promised to do, he gave to him the whole region on the eastern and western banks in the cataract-district.

Such donations of land were probably made to the temples in all periods; but in the New Kingdom their possessions were chiefly increased by the

dedication to the gods of the greater part of the booty which was brought to the Nile from distant lands after the successful campaigns of the kings of dynasties XVIII. and XIX. It was regarded as the tribute due to the god by whose aid the victory had been won. Inscriptions are preserved of Thutmosis III. and Sethos I. in which the royal gifts of these Pharaohs to the priests are enumerated.

There is more especially a document of the end of the reign of Ramses III., that is, dating from about 1150 B.C., which gives us an excellent idea of the great riches possessed by the Egyptian temples at that time.[1] Their property included no fewer than 103,175 men, 490,386 head of cattle, 513 gardens, 1,074,418 acres of land, 88 ships, 51½ dockyards, and 169 townships, situated both in the Nile valley and abroad. The men who belonged to the sanctuaries were probably in part slaves captured in war, but in part, too, they were peasant serfs and artisans. They were required to work in the fields, to watch the herds, and, last but not least,—just as we read in the history of the children of Israel—they rendered obligatory service in the construction of great temples; not a few of them were further compelled to pay tribute in

[1] The "Great Harris Papyrus" in the British Museum. Cp. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 299 *ff;* Erman, "Zur Erklärung des Papyrus Harris" (*Sitzungsber. der Kgl. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1903, xxi.).

gold, silver, and various natural products. If, now, we take into account the multitude of fields which were the property of the gods, we are entitled to say that a relatively large proportion of the land was in possession of the dead hand. By a comparison with modern statistics it has been calculated that Amon of Thebes owned, roughly speaking, one-tenth of the Egyptian soil, and no less than the one-hundredth part of the population. Next to him the sun-god Rē of Heliopolis and Ptah of Memphis were the wealthiest gods of the land. The clergy thus acquired an economic preponderance in the state, which procured them at the same time immense political power. To what consequences this necessarily led, we learn from modern examples—I need only mention Spain. In the end the high priests of Amon became the most influential persons in the realm ; and it was thus but a short step to take when, after the death of the last Ramses, one of them thrust the heir aside and placed the crown on his own head. Although the monarchy of the high priests was not of long duration, this event was the culminating point in the history of clerical power; the Church had prevailed over the State, but in so doing had sealed the death warrant of the national glory for all time.

LECTURE IV.

Magic Art.—The Life after Death.

THE Egyptians would have been no true Orientals if they had not, like their Mohammedan and Christian posterity, been crammed full of superstition. We find, accordingly, that witchcraft played a very great part in the whole of ancient Egyptian life. Charms were the remedies employed against all manner of evils, the means by which diseases might be expelled or the favour of a loved one gained. To smuggle magic figures into an enemy's house was to procure his illness or disablement. The charms to which recourse was had on these occasions were by preference connected with particular episodes in the mythological history of the gods. It was thought that the same means which had been employed by divine beings with happy results would, in similar cases, work equally well on earth in the hands or the mouths of men. Here again a prominent position is taken by the legends of Osiris and Isis and the sun-god Rē.

After the tragic death of her husband, the goddess

Isis gave birth to a son, Horus, in the swamps of the Delta. One evening, on returning home from the fields, she found the boy apparently lifeless. "He had moistened the earth with the water from his eyes and the foam from his lips; his body was stiff, his heart stood still, no muscle twitched in all his limbs." A scorpion had stung him. In her anguish of heart the despairing mother could only beseech the Sun-god for help. The latter stayed his bark in the heavens, and sent down Thout, the god of wisdom, to succour his child. Thout recalled him to life by magic charms; and these same charms, it was thought, which had once saved the young Horus, would heal in like manner any mortal who had been stung by a scorpion.[1]

The greatest magical power, however, was reserved for those who knew the mystic name of the almighty pantheistic deity, the sun-god Rē. For long ages this god had with great prudence preserved the secret of his name from all save himself, until Isis, the "great magician" among the gods, wrested it from him by a stratagem, and thereby acquired immense power. An old legend tells us how she did so.[2] Once more we are introduced

[1] Cp. *Zeitschr. f. ägypt. Sprache*, 1879 (vol. xvii.), p. 1 *ff.*

[2] Cp. Lefébure in the *Zeitschr.*, 1883 (vol. xxi.), p. 27 *ff.*; Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 265 *ff.*

to the aged Rē, king of gods and men, but now weakening with years and held in diminished regard. Isis, in particular, no longer admitted his sovereign rights, and would fain have exercised equal authority with him in heaven and on earth. To this end there was but one means: she must learn the god's numerous names, known only to himself, which gave him power over the universe. In order to possess herself of this secret, she devised a stratagem. She took saliva, which his divine and aged majesty had let fall upon the ground, kneaded it with earth, and so made a serpent. Having made it, the goddess cast it upon the path by which the god loved to wander through his kingdom.

One day, when Rē had gone out with his train of attendant gods, this serpent bit him. He cried aloud with pain, and his cry reached to heaven. His divine attendants asked anxiously: "What aileth thee, what aileth thee?" but he could answer them nothing. His jaws rattled, the poison seized upon his flesh. . . . When the great god had calmed himself, he called to his escort: "Come to me, ye that are sprung from my flesh, ye gods that went forth from me! some painful thing hath done me injury; my heart feeleth it, but my eye seeth it not. My hand hath not made it; likewise I know not whereby it hath been made. Never before

have I felt the like pain; no sickness is worse than this. I am a prince, and the son of a prince. . . . I am he that hath many names, that hath many forms. My form is seen in every god. My name was spoken by my father and my mother. After that, it was hidden in my bosom by him that begat me, that no witchcraft might have power over me. Behold now, when I went forth to look upon that which I have created, when I walked through the kingdom which I have made, a thing stung me which I know not. Is it fire, is it water? My heart is full of burning, my body trembleth, all my limbs shudder. Let there be brought hither to me the children of the gods, they that speak wisdom, whose mouth is full of understanding, whose power reacheth to the heavens."

Then the gods came, full of mourning. Isis came, too, who had wrought all the mischief, she whose mouth is filled with the breath of life, whose magic spells destroy pain, whose words awake the dead. She said: "What aileth thee, what aileth thee, divine father? A serpent hath brought this sickness upon thee; a creature which thou hast made hath lifted up his head against thee. Yet shall it fall by the might of magic spells; I will bring it low before the sight of thy splendour."

The god then tells her the nature of his sufferings.

Isis answers: "Name to me thy name, divine father; for he shall live whosoever is called upon by his name."

To this Rē made reply: "I am he that made the heavens and the earth, that created the mountains and the living things that are upon them. I made the waters and the great ocean that was in the beginning. . . . I am he that made the heaven and the secret of its horizon, that gave to the gods their souls within them. When he openeth his eyes, all is light; when he closeth them, there is darkness. The waters of the Nile rise when he commandeth. But the gods know not his name. I make the hours and the days; I send the year and I appoint the time of overflowing; I make the living fire. I am the god Kheperi in the morning, Rē at noonday, and Atum in the evening."

Yet the poison did not abate, but took a stronger hold, and the great god was still sick. Then Isis said to Rē: "That is not thy name which thou hast spoken. But name it to me, and the poison will abate. For he shall live whose name is spoken." The poison burnt more deeply still, and was fiercer than flame and fire. Then said the Majesty of Rē: "My will is that Isis examine me, and that my name pass from my bosom to her bosom."

Then the god hid himself from the gods, and the

bark of infinity [that is, the ship of the sun] was made empty. By a remarkable process the name of the god was now taken from him; Isis learned it and repeated an incantation, with the result that the poison abated and Rē became whole again. Thus Isis, the great one, the mistress of the gods, knows the mysterious, magical name of the sun-god; and with the same words with which she once drove the poison out of his body, any one else may now work marvellous cures of poisonous snake-bites.

The name of Rē which the goddess then learned is unknown to us. But, to judge by what we know of these magic formulæ from Egyptian texts, it is not probable that any very great wisdom was concealed in it. As a rule the magicians utter quite meaningless abracadabras, arbitrary combinations of sounds, only intended to have a sufficiently foreign ring about them, Phœnician or otherwise.

All these magic arts date back from the earliest period of Egyptian history. In the primitive religious writings which we commonly term the "Pyramid-texts," we find that snake-charms, for example, already occupy a very considerable space. In a later age, toward the end of the New Kingdom, when religion was degenerating more and more into the mere rehearsal of a stock of formulæ, magic gained the upper hand altogether and began to play

the principal part in religious life. The faster the green tree of faith withered, the greater was the luxuriance with which the unwholesome by-growths of superstition blossomed forth.

In this category may fairly be placed the observation of days, the tendency to count particular days of the year as specially lucky or unlucky. At the present time, as we all know, Friday, the day on which Christ was nailed to the cross, is held by many to be a day of evil omen, on which it is not wise to start on a long journey or begin an important undertaking. In a somewhat similar manner, those were specially marked days for the Egyptians on which the noteworthy events of their mythology were supposed to have taken place.

On the first day of the month Mechir the heavens had been raised aloft, that is, the true creation of the world had then been accomplished; it was, therefore, very naturally regarded as a lucky day, and so was the 27th of the month Hathor, on which, according to the legend, Horus and Set had made peace with one another and divided the earth between them. But the 14th of Tybi was an unlucky day; on it the sisters Isis and Nephthys had once chanted the funeral dirge of their murdered brother Osiris; on this day, therefore, all music and song were to be avoided.

Particular black days even exercised an influence over the future. The unlucky child who first saw the light on the 23d of Paope was destined to be the prey of a crocodile; he who was born on the 3d of Choiak was sure to be deaf, while if his nativity fell on the 20th of the same month blindness was his lot. But well for him whose birthday was the 9th of Paope: it was appointed for him to die full of days.[1]

All this is confirmed for us by Herodotus when he writes: "The Egyptians have found out to which god each month and each day belongs, and how the destinies of every individual are shaped according to his birthday, both how he is to die, and what manner of man he is to be."[2]

Soothsaying and divination proper do not seem to have enjoyed any great vogue in Egypt. It is only by casual references that we learn of oracles being received from divine images, and, characteristically enough, these reports date from the era of religious decadence. Thus at Thebes the image of Amon, the great king of the gods, was in the later period the means of deciding even important questions of state. When the god had been carried in his bark

[1] Cp. the calendar of the Papyrus Sallier 4 in the British Museum; Chabas, *Le Calendrier des jours fastes et nefastes;* Maspero, *Contes populaires de l'Egypte ancienne*, p. lvii, *ff.;* Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 351 *f.*

[2] Herodotus, ii., 82.

by the priests out of his dwelling-place, the Holy of Holies, the questions to which answers were desired were put to him by the high priest, or else by the king, and the god made known his opinion by movements of some kind, perhaps, too, by particular sounds or words. The priests, no doubt, knew how to assist the god in giving his reply by means of invisible threads, or even by a speaking-machine concealed in the bark.

Responses were delivered in a similar manner at the celebrated Oracle of Zeus Amon, situated in the Oasis of Amon in the Libyan desert, the modern Sive. As every one knows, Alexander the Great visited this holy place; and out of the host that accompanied him there are some who have reported, as eye-witnesses, the mode in which the divine image was consulted. It was carried about by the priests in a golden bark, just as in the Egyptian mother-country: "the priests, however, walk without any will of their own in whatever direction the god leads them by a sign; a multitude of women and maidens follow the procession; they sing songs of praise, and extol the god in verses handed down from past ages."[1] The response, it would appear, was read from the steps of the priests, which were supposed to be guided by the deity.

[1] Diodor, 17, 50.

While magic was thus of considerable importance for the earthly life of an ancient Egyptian, it played an altogether decisive part in the world of the dead. All happiness hereafter, even the continued existence of a human being after death, depended for the greater part, according to Egyptian ideas, on the knowledge and application of a host of magical formulæ.

The failure of the Egyptians to think out religious problems to a clear issue, the confusion of their entire mythology, are features which recur in their notions of the life after death. To the unsophisticated man there is always something incomprehensible in the sudden cessation of life. He cannot and will not understand the view that a dear relation, his father or his mother, his beloved wife, or his friend, has in this *one* moment of death been parted from him for ever. A strong and healthy sense of life resists with all its force a theory which annihilates its own individuality, which abolishes its personal existence beyond recall. The only way in which man can rejoice in life though his fellows die round him daily, his only means of reconciliation with death, is the belief in a personal survival. It is thus that the Egyptians sought, as other ancient peoples sought and the moderns seek to-day, to come to terms with the dark and hidden mystery of death.

It must be admitted that on the how and where

of this survival the Egyptians held different opinions at different times and places. Their ideas on these subjects crossed and recrossed each other like the threads of a tangled skein. In a single text, in a single prayer or formula, it is not rare to find the most opposite notions in the closest proximity to each other.

This state of things, however, is not one at which we ought to be so very greatly surprised. Take a funeral-sermon preached by a modern clergyman, and endeavour to gain from it a clear conception of the Christian position as regards the last things. What a wealth of ideas, partly, no doubt, expressed only in metaphor, you will have to work upon!

The most popular, the most widespread, and at the same time certainly the oldest of the Egyptian notions respecting the hereafter was that according to which after death a human being leads a second life under the same conditions as those which governed his first. There is no change of form; the man, the woman, the greybeard, the child, live on as such. The cemetery is their dwelling-place, their home the tomb. There the husband rules over his wife and children, and is served by man-servants and maid-servants. The same joys which made his earthly life happy are still vouchsafed to him; above all, it is as necessary for him as ever that he should both

eat and drink. His new existence is as dependent as the old upon the support of food and drink, without which he must suffer the tortures of hunger and thirst, and, if he is not to perish miserably, must seek nourishment in the most disgusting filth—a fate equivalent to a second death.

Just as a deity needs to be supported by offerings of food and drink, so is it also with the dead. The first duty of the relatives is, therefore, to see that the deceased lacks nothing; a man who has the means endows a religious foundation for his own benefit, and appoints funerary priests to perform the necessary sacrifices. That which cannot be provided from the supplies of nature is procured by magical incantations and prayers. Four deities, the so-called "Children of Horus," have under their care the inward parts of man; on them, too, devolves the special task of scaring away hunger and thirst from the dead. Whoever passed by a grave was bound, if he had any religious feeling, to give a thought to the welfare of him who rested there; every sepulchral inscription called upon him to recite the established formula of invocation which ensured a supply of provisions for the dead, and which ran thus: "A thousand jugs of beer, a thousand loaves of bread, a thousand head of cattle, a thousand ducks, for the soul of M or N."

In their own dwelling-place amid the sands of the desert, situated, in the case of most cities, to the west, on the left bank of the river, the dead formed a community to themselves. As such, they were governed by a special god of the dead; and as a rule the guardian of the locality was at the same time the lord of the departed, the ruler "over them that are in the west." Just as the destinies of the living are entrusted to him, so also the dead are under his care, and he allows his subjects to participate in the offerings which are laid upon his table. At the same time there were many cities in which the dead were under separate divinities. Thus at Memphis, for example, we find a god of the dead named Sokaris. Another guardian of the cemetery was Anubis, who manifested himself in the form of a jackal. Just as this animal prowls, spectre-like, round the graves in the desert during the watches of the night, seeming to keep watch, as it were, over the resting-places of the dead, so also did the god, it was supposed, and in the same form. But at quite an early period all these local gods of the dead had already passed into the background, to make way for a single god who was henceforth for the whole of Egypt the chief "lord of the Western folk"—Osiris. But of this more hereafter.

The dead man is not kept a close prisoner in his

dark tomb. By day he is free to leave his narrow house, his grave, his coffin, and to roam at will over the earth. There, also, it is true, he must guard against the attack of malicious enemies; poisonous snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, lie in wait for him, and he must be exactly acquainted with the magic formulæ which will protect him against these adversaries.

On occasion, too, the dead man will interfere with those still in the pride of life; he grudges the living their happiness, and seeks to draw them over the border to himself, that he may have new companions in the West. It is where sickness reigns that he promises himself the speediest success, and his appearance there rouses fear and terror. The anxious mother, sitting by the bedside of her sick child, sees him creep into the house with averted face, and speaks to him boldly. She says:

"Comest thou to kiss this child?—I suffer thee not to kiss him;
Comest thou to quiet him?—I suffer thee not to quiet him;
Comest thou to harm him?—I suffer thee not to harm him.
Comest thou to take him away?—I suffer thee not to take him away."

The mother is also acquainted with a preservative medicine which she administers to the child: herbs,

honey, and fish-bones are among its ingredients. All these things are horrible to the dead man, and he flees away.[1]

Sometimes it is the desire of revenge that brings the dead back among the living, bent on afflicting them with all manner of calamities, but more especially illness. An officer had lost his wife; shortly afterwards, when he himself fell ill, he was told by a magician that this illness was probably the work of the dear departed. He then wrote her a letter and deposited it at her grave. It is a pathetic and at the same time a naïve message that he addresses to his dead wife:

"What evil have I ever done thee that I am now in such misery? What have I done to thee that now thou layest hands upon me? . . . From the time that I became thy husband, up to this day, have I ever done aught that I would have hidden from thee? Thou becamest my wife when I was still young, and I was by thy side. Then I was appointed to all manner of offices; I was still by thy side, I left thee not and brought no grief into thy heart. . . . And behold, when I gave instruction to the officers of Pharaoh's foot-soldiers and to them that fight in his chariots, I caused them to come nigh, that they might overthrow each other before thy eyes, and they brought all manner of good things to lay them down before thee. . . . When thou didst

[1] Cp. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, namely, p. 12 *f.*

sicken with the sickness which thou hast suffered, I went to the chief physician : he prepared medicines for thee and did all which thou didst desire of him. After that, when it was required of me that I should journey with Pharaoh to the South, my thoughts were with thee, and I lived for the eight months [of separation] having no desire to eat or to drink. When I returned to Memphis [the woman having died in the meantime], I besought Pharaoh and came hither to thee and mourned then greatly with my people before my house." [1]

It is hardly necessary, I think, to add another touch to this charming and characteristic picture, or to emphasise the features of Egyptian thought and feeling which it exhibits in so clear a light.

Like many other peoples—I will only mention the Greeks—the ancient Egyptians believed that a concrete entity, impalpable during life, has its residence in the human body. This soul—so we translate the Egyptian *bai*—is during life inseparably connected with the body, but leaves the corpse at the moment of death. The favourite mode of representing it was to give it the form of a heron ; in later times it appears also as a bird with a human head, in which the lineaments of the deceased are reproduced. These human-headed soul-birds were borrowed from the Egyptians by the Greeks, and the type occurs

[1] According to a papyrus in Leyden ; cp. Maspero, *Études égypt.* p. 145 *ff.*; Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 151 *f.*

frequently in Greek art, for example, in the representation of the Harpies. Now, the "living soul" of a man must not be kept at a distance from his body after death, it must be at liberty, especially by night, when evil spirits haunt the cemeteries, to return to the sepulchral chamber and rest upon the body. For this purpose it is necessary that the soul should be able to distinguish its own corpse from the others entombed in the same place, and it was doubtless to facilitate this task that so much labour was expended in Egypt on the preservation of dead bodies.

But, besides the soul, there were, according to Egyptian notions, yet other spiritual entities connected with man. What exactly was their relation to the soul, we are unable to determine. The most important of them, one, too, of which frequent mention is made in the texts, is the so-called *Ka*. In my opinion it is not, as is commonly supposed, a kind of ethereal facsimile or double of the man, but a guardian spirit or genius. Born with the man, it accompanies him invisibly through life, and even after death its protecting care does not cease.

We have seen that the dead man is able to leave his house by day. But he can do more; he can assume different shapes at pleasure, transform himself into this or that kind of creature. Not that such a change is effected by his mere wish; he must know

the particular magic formula appropriate to his choice. By reciting this, he may become a swallow, a sparrow-hawk, or a heron; a ram, a crocodile, or even a flower.

These ideas no doubt became known in later times to the Greek scholars who made pilgrimages, in search of wisdom, to the priestly schools of Egypt; and I think it not improbable that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls held by various philosophers, Pythagoras and Plato, for example, owed something to their influence. Fundamentally, however, the two theories are entirely different. According to the Egyptian belief, the soul or the deceased man himself assumes different forms quite at his own will, much as in our fairy-tales the great wizard can transform himself into a lion or a mouse. But the Greek doctrine—like the Indian—teaches that these migrations through good and evil beasts, which the soul is compelled to perform after death, are a means of purification, that it thereby expiates sins committed on earth and is gradually cleansed.

In all this confusion of ideas there is one constant feature, namely, that the dead man and his soul are conceived of as residing on the earth. But another belief, which also dates back from primitive times, transfers this residence to heaven. Carried away by a poetic fancy, men imagined that in the countless

stars which nightly gleam in the wondrous heavens they beheld the spirits of the dead. But a Pharaoh who has passed away "takes his seat in the bark of the sun-god; he journeys among the stars of the heavens and leads the same pleasant life as the Lord of the Horizon [the sun-god] himself." Later, this privilege of the king was universalised, and every man after death might accompany the god of heaven on his travels through the firmament.

It is, again, quite a different conception according to which the dead are received in heaven among the company of the gods and lead a life of bliss in their society. To begin with there was the by no means easy task of the ascent by which heaven was reached. The dead were accordingly conceived of as soaring through the ether as birds, or even as grasshoppers; sometimes, too,—the thought is still more grossly material—they were represented as climbing up the rungs of a gigantic ladder. This was supposed to stand somewhere in the West, reaching perpendicularly from earth to heaven. Gods and goddesses kept watch over it, day and night, and no one might set foot upon it who did not know the appointed magic formula. Not till this had been pronounced might the dead man begin to mount; but even then he was not out of danger, and a false step might precipitate him into the depths, unless

helping gods, likewise summoned by magical words, stretched out compassionate hands and drew him upwards.

At the summit, the mighty gates of heaven opened before him, and he entered into the kingdom above the earth. Heaven itself he found not unlike the world he had left. Before him there stretched out a long valley, traversed by a broad river, and broken up by numerous lakes and canals. Even now a long journey remained to be performed before the dead man could arrive at the place where he must dwell. There were many lakes in which he had to purify himself, many canals and river-branches to be crossed. Since he possessed no boat of his own, it was necessary for him to summon a ferryman at each crossing, naturally by means of a magic formula, in which the mystic name of the ferryman was contained.

There were two principal places in heaven where the dead abode—the "field of sacrifices" and the "field of rushes." Here they dwelt as "the transfigured," as "spirits of light," and though they had not become real gods, they were looked upon by men as higher beings, as a kind of demi-gods. Among them, the deceased king retained a position of special eminence. He was once more a king, and even the gods bowed down before him. He was set

upon a throne of state, and received the mace and the sceptre as the emblems of his dignity.

On the "field of rushes" the dead occupied themselves with the favourite industry of Egypt, agriculture. But this pursuit rewarded the exertions of the beatified husbandman in a degree very different from that common on earth. The corn stood seven ells high, of which the ear alone measured three. They prepared the soil, scattered the seed, reaped and garnered the harvest; then at evening when their work was done amused themselves with draughts beneath the sycamores.

Besides these two conceptions, which place the dead on earth and in heaven respectively, there is yet a third which contradicts them both and finds a home for the departed in the lower world. Beneath the flat earth lies a second earth named *Twet*, a land which like Egypt is traversed by a river. On both banks are long passages and deep caverns; these are the dwelling-places of the dead. By day this is a region of dreariness, desolation, and mourning. But by night, when the sun has descended in the west behind the mythical mountain, Manu, his light shines upon the dead, who then behold the splendour of Rē. "The departed, who are in their halls, in their caverns, praise the sun; their eyes are opened, their heart is full of felicity when they behold the

sun; they shout for joy when his body is over them."

In a later age, more especially, this nightly journey of the sun through the underworld was described in full and picturesque detail, with all manner of additional touches derived from local beliefs on the place reserved for the dead. Through the midst of the underworld flows the subterranean Nile, on which the ram-headed sun-god sails, surrounded by a numerous train of divine attendants. The banks to right and left are peopled by spirits, *dæmons*, and all manner of monstrous beings, who greet the sun-god and keep his enemies at a distance. Corresponding to the twelve hours of the night there are twelve regions into which the underworld is divided in the direction of its length. These are separated from each other by twelve massive gates. These are guarded by gigantic serpents, while the approach to each entrance is further defended by two fire-breathing serpents and two gods. The sun-god is required to know the names of the various serpents and *dæmons;* it is not until he has pronounced them that the monsters retire, the gates open, and the bark passes on into the new region.

The common order of mankind dwell as phantoms in the lower world, where they salute the sun-god, and on occasion tow his boat over the shallows of

the river, just as happens in the navigation of the Egyptian Nile. The deceased king, however, sits with the sun-god in his bark; indeed, he even becomes *one* with him. In this manner he is permitted to share in the marvellous night-journey, provided, of course, that he too knows the mystic names of the *dæmons* and serpents. And in order to provide him with this knowledge, it was customary, during the New Kingdom, to inscribe the walls of his grotto-tomb with an illustrated account of everything that is in the underworld. Here, too, what had originally been the peculiar privilege of the Pharaoh was afterwards imitated by the people at large; and the belief arose that *every* dead man as such might share the nightly journey of the sun-god, or perform it as sun-god himself, if he knew the series of magic formulæ, and if an exact description of the underworld accompanied him to the grave.

This tangled medley of simple and complicated, of naïve and artificially elaborated ideas was early influenced and involved in still greater confusion by the development of the doctrine touching the god Osiris. You will remember that Osiris was murdered by his wicked brother Set; his son, Horus, however, avenged his death by defeating Set, and succeeded in restoring him to life. In the desperate fight of the two kindred gods Set had torn out an eye of

Horus; this the latter presented to his father, and the remarkable gift was what contributed most to his resuscitation. But, in addition, Horus was obliged to use a quantity of magic formulæ and ceremonies in order to complete his work. At last Osiris is once more alive; he is again in possession of all his bodily powers; he can speak, eat, and drink. As king, he is set once more on the throne, but not now to rule over men only; he is henceforth the "King of the Western folk," the prince of the blessed dead.

"O Osiris—" so runs a song of great antiquity,— "Horus comes, he embraces thee; he causes Thout [the moon-god] to drive back the companions of Set before thee; he brings them all [captive] together. He causes the heart of Set to quake before thee; for thou art greater than he! . . . [The earth god] Geb beholds thy excellence; he sets thee in thy place, he [being also the father of Osiris] brings thy two sisters, Isis and Nephthys, to thy side. Horus makes the gods to join with thee and keep thee company and not remain far from thee. He makes the gods to set thee free. Geb sets his foot upon the head of thine enemy, who is in terror of thee. Thy son Horus smites Set, he takes back from him his own eye [that had been torn out] and gives it to thee that through it thou mayest be mighty before the spirits [that is, the dead]. Horus makes thee to overthrow thine enemies. . . . Horus throws Set down, he casts him beneath thee so that he carries thee and quakes, as the earth quakes."[1]

[1] *Pyramid-Texts*, chap. 145.

Now the mythical history of Osiris is continually repeated on earth in the case of each Pharaoh. He, too, has ruled over men and made his people happy; he, too, has been attacked by death, as Osiris was by Set. For him, too, there arises in his son and successor, the new king, an avenger, who, like Horus, has the duty of recalling his father to life, and who can do it if he employs the old formulæ and rites once used by Horus. Thus the dead king prevails over all his enemies, he himself becomes Osiris, and the gods raise him upon the throne in the world of the dead.

As to where the realm of Osiris is situated, the Egyptians themselves had no exact knowledge. Originally it was assigned to a definite locality, we do not know with certainty where. Later, it was placed more generally in the West, or it was thought that its place was above in the heavens, in the fields of the blessed, or in the *Twet*, the underworld beneath the earth.

Even in the earliest times the Osiris myth enjoyed great popularity, and the belief gradually gained ground that not the king only but every other man might be awaked to new life like Osiris, might become one with Osiris. The rites which at first were performed only for the benefit of the god and his earthly successor, the Pharaoh, were soon applied

to every corpse, and every deceased person was by the agency of the Osiris formulæ made into an Osiris —that is, conducted to a life of eternal blessedness.

But it would be putting an undeserved slight upon the ethical ideas of the ancient Egyptians if we were to suppose that the destinies of man after death were regarded by them as solely dependent upon the knowledge and the recitation of the various magic formulæ. Even in the texts of the earliest times higher requirements are made of the dead[1]: he must have led a virtuous life on earth; he must, after his death, be found "just," if he is to attain happiness like Osiris. Here, too, there is an imitation of the precedents contained in the legends of the gods.

At Heliopolis the strife between Osiris and Set had once been decided by a law-suit; from this Osiris emerged as victor, he was declared "just." And like the god so also every man, before he enters the regions of the West, must submit himself to a divine tribunal. The sessions of this are held in the "Hall of Justice." Osiris himself is the judge; by his side are forty-two terrible *dæmons*. Their aspect is fear-inspiring: a human body is surmounted by the head of a hawk, a vulture, a lion, a ram, or some other animal; each one holds a knife in his hand.

[1] Cp. *Zeitschr. für ägypt. Sprache*, 31 (1893), p. 75 *f*.

Equally formidable are their names: one is called "Devourer of Blood," another "Eye of Flame," others again are "Bone-Breaker," "Fire-Leg," "Head-Turner," "Shadow-Eater," and so on.

Before each of these weird judges the dead man must confess that he has *not* committed a quite definite crime. "I have not done what the gods abominate," he confesses to one of them; "I have not allowed any one to be hungry," "I have not suborned assassination," "I have not stolen the offerings of the gods," "I have done no murder." Only when he can with a good conscience deny all these mortal sins is he conducted by the jackal-headed god Anubis into the hall before Osiris. His heart is now weighed on a great balance against the symbol of justice; and the god Thout registers his freedom from sin. But close by there sits a huge hippopotamus, ready to devour the heart found wanting. It is not until this ordeal is safely past that the dead man is led before Osiris by Horus, just as a subject is conducted by a palace official into the presence of a king; and now he is allowed to enter into the realm of the blessed among the attendants of the great god.[1]

At a very early age the maxims relating to the life after death had already been collected. The old-

[1] *Book of the Dead*, chap. 125.

est of these works, which in part dates from the prehistoric period, is contained in the *Pyramid-Texts*, so called because they became known to us in their earliest form in the pyramids of the kings belonging to the end of the fifth and to the sixth dynasties.[1] A somewhat later work, but one which became very popular in the Middle Kingdom, is the *Book of the Dead*.[2] The description of the "Journey of the sun in the twelve hours of the night" is known to us from the *Book of that which is in the Lower World*, from the *Book of the Gates*, and from yet other writings.[3] But this is only a small portion of the

[1] Edited and translated by G. Maspero: "Les inscriptions des pyramides de Seggareh" (in the *Recueil des travaux relatifs à la philol. et à l'archéol. égypt. et assyr.*, 1881–1889, and in a separate volume, Paris, 1894).

[2] Lepsius, *Aelteste Texte des Todtenbuches* (Berlin, 1867); Naville, *Das ägyptische Totenbuch der 18–20 Dyn.* (Berlin, 1886); Lepsius, *Das Totenbuch der Aegypter* (Berlin, 1842). Cp. Maspero, "Le Livre des Morts" (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, vol. xv., pp. 266–316, and *Études de mythologie et d'archéologie*, vol. i., pp. 325–38 *f.*). The best translation of the *Book of the Dead* is that published by Le Page Renouf and Naville in the *Proceedings of the Society of Bibl. Archeology* (also separately under the title: Le Page Renouf, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead.* Complete Translation, Commentary, and Notes); cp. also Budge, *Book of the Dead;* the chapters of "Coming Forth by the Day." The Egyptian text according to the Theban recension in hieroglyphic. Edited from papyri, with translation, vocabulary, etc. 3 vols.

[3] Cp. Lanzone, *Le domicile des Esprits;* Féquier, *Le livre de ce qu'il y a dans l'Hadès;* Maspero, "Les hypogées royaux de Thèbes" (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religious*, vols. xvii. and xviii., and *Études de mythologie et d'archéologie égyptiennes*, ii., p. 1 *ff.*).

extensive literature of the dead possessed by the Egyptians. To deal with all the works of the kind, to explain all the different theories represented by them, is more than I propose to attempt; it would take us too far, and I am afraid that in the strange and intricate maze your interest, too, would soon flag.

Everywhere we meet traces of the endeavour to preserve human existence after death, and to provide the most favourable possible conditions for the life of the soul. We are not to infer from this, as has been done, that the Egyptians depreciated earthly existence, and during the whole time of their life did nothing else except prepare themselves for the hereafter. Quite the contrary is the case. It is only quite exceptionally that we come across feelings and thoughts in which the yearning for death predominates. Thus it is an exception when, in a particular instance, one tired of life greets death as a friend in the following words:

"Death stands to-day before me, as when a sick man becomes whole, as when a man goes forth after a sickness;
Death stands to-day before me like the smell of myrrh, as when a man sits on a windy day beneath sails;
Death stands to-day before me like a rill of water, as when a man returns home from a ship of war;

Death stands to-day before me, as when a man desires
to see his house again after he has spent many
years in captivity."[1]

Further on the same man congratulates him who has finished with life and attained happiness in death:

"He who is dead will become a living god and punish
the sins of him who commits them;
He who is dead will stand in the bark of the sun and
receive that which is most choice in the temples."[2]

But — this is a point which may well be emphasised once more — these are isolated instances of such emotional pessimism. For the generality of men, in Egypt as in other places, there is "mourning when they think of burial, something which brings tears and troubles the heart of man." They are pained that "death tears a man away from his house and throws him upon the hills. Never will he return again to behold the sun." And even though a man has built himself ever so costly a tomb of granite and limestone, and furnished it with everything that is necessary, "his sacrificial stones will yet be thrice as empty" as those of the homeless person, "as those of the wearied ones who die upon the embankment and leave none behind them."[3]

[1] Cp. Erman, *Gespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele*, p. 67 *ff.*
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 71 *f.* [3] *L. c.*, p. 41 *ff.*

There is, therefore, but one thing to do: "Enjoy life, follow pleasure and forget care." No mourning, no sacrifices, no ceremonies can after all bring back the dead into the pride of life. This is the burden of another old and highly popular song which was sung at the funeral feast[1]:

"The gods [that is the kings] who were in past times
rest in their pyramids;
The noble also and the wise are buried in their pyramids;
They that built houses, their place is no longer,
Thou seest what is become of them; . . .
No one comes thence to tell us what is become of them,
To tell us how it fares with them, to comfort our heart.
Until ye approach the place whither they are gone,
Forget not to glorify thyself with joyful heart,
And follow thy heart as long as thou livest.
Lay myrrh upon thy head, clothe thyself in fine linen,
Anointing thyself with the truly marvellous things of
god.
Adorn thyself, make thyself as fair as thou canst,
And let thy heart sink not.
Follow thy heart and thy joy,
As long as thou livest upon earth;
Trouble not thy heart until the day of mourning come
upon thee.
Surely whose heart stands still hears not your mourning,

[1] The "Song of the house of the blessed king Entef, that is written before the Harper"; cp. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 386; W. Max Müller, *Die Liebespoesie der alten Aegypter*, p. 29 *ff.*

And he who lies in the grave perceives not your lamentation.
Therefore
With joyous countenance keep a day of festival and rest not in it;
For no one takes his goods with him,
Yea, no one returns that is gone hence."

You see that, in spite of all the magic, all the witchcraft, all the imagination which was expended in the interests of the life after death, the naïve, intense joy in life was not stifled even among the Egyptians. With whatever care they may have elaborated their preparations for a future existence, they yet never lost the wholesome feeling that of *all good things life is the best.*

LECTURE V.

Graves and Burials.—The Egyptian Religion Outside Egypt.

IN my last lecture I briefly sketched to you the ideas entertained by the Egyptians on the Last Things, their conceptions of the life after death. These conceptions, we have now to observe, exercised a most far-reaching influence on the whole body of Egyptian funeral customs. Among their consequences we may reckon those solidly constructed tombs which are still admired to-day, the practice of carefully embalming corpses, and the host of gifts by which the dead were accompanied to their last home. Here, again, we have to deal with a wide circle of usages, within which, from century to century and from district to district, considerable deviation was bound to occur. In the Old Kingdom funerals were conducted otherwise than in the time of Alexander the Great; they were not the same in the Delta as in the cataract region of Assuan (Syene), far to the south. I propose, now, to draw your attention to a few points in this most interesting depart-

ment of Egyptology, in order to illustrate the manner in which religious notions concerning the hereafter of man have found practical expression.

The first object aimed at was the safe custody of the corpse in its grave, the provision of a true resting-place for the dead. Next to thieves and robbers, whose favourite and most profitable hunting-ground was at all times the cemetery, the water of the inundations was the deadliest enemy of the graves. The consequence was that it became a matter of primary importance that the dead should be interred, not in moist land, but in higher ground, situated above the range of the highest Nile, in the sandy or rocky soil of the desert. An opinion frequently expressed is that the Egyptians buried their dead on the western bank of the Nile because that was the region of the setting sun. This, however, is an error. It is true that at Memphis, at Abydos, at Thebes, at Syene, the great necropolis was situated in the "Amentet," or region of the West; at other cities, however,—I will mention Tell-el-Amarna and Akhmîm, the ancient Khemmis—it was to be found on the eastern bank, to the east of the city of the living. It is obvious that it depended entirely on local conditions, where the most convenient and the safest resting-place was to be found for the departed. And if in Egyptian texts the "West" is often synonymous with necropolis,

and the dead are spoken of shortly as the "Western folk," these expressions must have been originally coined in some city, probably Abydos, at which the community of the dead happened to be situated in that particular quarter.

The most ancient graves of which we have any knowledge were simple rectangular trenches. The corpse was placed inside, the cavity filled up with sand, and over all, as in the Arabian graves of to-day, a small mound of sand and stones piled up. For the king, as may well be imagined, so simple and homely a tomb was inadequate. As during his lifetime he had towered above the mass of his subjects like a giant among dwarfs, so his grave was expected to be larger and loftier than those tenanted by his people. He therefore began, while still among the living, to prepare for himself a tomb of imposing appearance.[1] A large rectangular building was constructed of bricks; in its interior were several chambers, inaccessible from outside, one of which was destined to receive the Pharaoh's corpse, while the others were reserved for various offerings buried with him. On the outside the building was adorned with niches in the form of doors, through which, it was supposed,

[1] *E. g.*, the tomb of the first historical king Menes, which is situated near the modern town of Nakada; cp. *Zeitschrift für ägypt. Sprache*, 36 (1898), p. 87 *ff.*

the dead monarch would be able to leave his tomb at pleasure and return to it again. In addition, these niches afforded a convenient receptacle to which, within a court enclosed by a wall, the necessary offerings to the dead might be brought. Further, there was placed in the tomb a large but simple memorial stone, on which, inscribed in majestic hieroglyphics, was the name of the dead king, without any addition. The tomb further contained several small gravestones of women, dwarfs, and even of dogs. These had been buried at the same time as the monarch; and it is not too much to assume that they had been his favourites during life and were slaughtered at his funeral that they might not be parted from him by death, but might continue to delight his heart in the hereafter. Later, when manners grew milder, these human sacrifices were omitted from the funeral ceremony; instead of devoting to the dead king the veritable companions of his life, the mere images or pictures of them were placed in his tomb.

Out of the simple tomb of bricks, such as I have just described, there was gradually developed the pyramidal form of tomb—a form which remained characteristic of royal sepulchres in Egypt for a thousand years, and which even to-day (you need merely look at an Egyptian postage-stamp) may still be

considered the sign and token of the Nile valley. Even where, as in the case of the Pyramid of Cheops, it attains a height of 480 odd feet, and approaches in altitude the loftiest products of human labour, it is nothing but an enormously magnified and architecturally elaborated funeral mound, raised over the king's tomb. The latter commonly consists of one or more subterranean chambers; less frequently it is situated in the heart of the pyramid itself, and access to it is only possible by means of a narrow passage, something like a gallery in a mine, which was carefully blocked up after the funeral. The inner rooms of the pyramid, one of which contained the coffin, were originally quite unadorned. It was not till the end of the Fifth Dynasty, that is about 2540 B.C., that the practice was begun of inscribing them with texts relating to the future life and forming a kind of *vade-mecum* for the dead monarch. These are the so-called *Pyramid-Texts*, of which I have already spoken in my last lecture, and which are the most important sources for our knowledge of the earliest Egyptian religion. The pyramid, however, lacked one thing which the most ancient royal tombs had possessed, namely, a place where offerings might be brought to the Manes of the dead. For this purpose, accordingly, a special temple was erected before the eastern side of the pyramid, a sanctuary dedicated

to the deceased king. It was adorned, like the temples of the gods, with reliefs and inscriptions; and the statues of the Pharaoh seem to have been set up in rooms specially prepared for them.

At the time when the Pharaohs began to build great pyramids for themselves, the great men of the realm also ceased to be content with their simple tombs, and caused more solid resting places to be constructed for their remains. They, too, took for their model the simple, primitive tomb surrounded by its cairn. Beneath the surface of the earth a chamber is hollowed out in the rock for the coffin; the approach is by a perpendicular shaft, not infrequently reaching to a depth of close on fifty feet. Above this a rectangular building with scarped walls is constructed of stone or of sun-dried bricks. These peculiar tombs have been designated by the Arabic word—*Mastaba* which means "bench," because their form recalls that of the stone benches placed in front of Arabian houses.

On the eastern side of the Mastaba a shallow niche is to be observed, the false door through which the dead man is supposed to go out and in. Here again was the place where offerings to the departed were laid upon a low table of limestone, and where prayers for his welfare were recited. Not infrequently this niche was deepened into a small chamber, in the

back wall of which the false door was placed, or, at a later period, a whole series of such chambers was constructed in the interior of the Mastaba.

The walls of these chambers were, whenever possible, covered with pictures and inscriptions. As a rule they relate to the tomb, and the offerings to the dead; sometimes, however, they included representations of all that the dead man had loved and cherished on earth, the occupations in which he had taken particular pleasure while yet among the living. It was imagined, no doubt, that the things thus reproduced pictorially, as by a charm, really continued to exist, and that the dead man was able to enjoy and make use of everything that was portrayed on the walls of his chamber. We see there how he sits at table, often accompanied by his family; food and drink are heaped up before him, so that he need but stretch out his hand to them. There are, further, long lists of all necessary means of life which it is desired that he should have at command: loaves and cakes, wine and beer, roast meat and vegetables, fruits, and everything else which the appetite of an ancient Egyptian could demand. In other pictures peasants and peasant women are represented as bringing all kinds of food to the dead man's grave; or he is depicted watching the chase in the desert, or inspecting the flocks

which must be supplied by particular villages for sacrifice to the dead. In many pictures we witness the sacrifices themselves; we see how the cattle are felled and slaughtered, how the butchers cut up the animals, uttering cries which are written down on the wall, and how the attendants carry the best parts, the legs, to the grave. A piece of ancient Egyptian life is thus enacted before our eyes in these vivid delineations, so that even after all these thousands of years any one who can sympathise with the actors and enter into the spirit of the scene derives the keenest pleasure from it.

In addition to these chambers, which the family of the deceased were permitted to enter, most of the Mastabas built in the grander style contained also a small, inaccessible room, which again is now generally known by its Arabic name *Serdâb*, that is, cellar. In it was set up the statue of the deceased, often accompanied by his wife or children; it was the private apartment set aside for the use of the dead man in his "eternal house." The Serdâb was separated from the chamber only by a wall; often, indeed, the two were even connected by a small hole, so that the deceased might partake of the offerings deposited before the false door, hear the prayers recited there, and inhale the sweet perfume of the incense.

Besides the pyramids and Mastabas, which in a later age, by a process which we have already noted more than once, were imitated by extensive classes in the population, there arose, towards the end of the Old Kingdom, somewhere about 2200 B.C., another form of tomb, the *Hypogæum*, or rock-tomb. No doubt at a still earlier period, during the Old Kingdom, tombs had been constructed in the mountain sides; now, however, a special form was given them, for which, just as for the sanctuaries of the gods, the ordinary human dwelling house served as a model. An open court stood beneath the sky, having behind it a vestibule carved out of the rock, the roof of which was supported by columns or pillars. Next came a large hall, also hollowed out of the mountain side, and also having its roof supported by columns. Behind this, finally, was a small apartment, containing the statue of the deceased. Those of you who remember the plan of the typical Egyptian temple will be at once struck with the exact agreement in design between the "house of the god" and the "house of the dead." The coffin containing the mummy of the deceased was placed in a chamber at a low level, reached from the Hall of Columns by a shaft.

At the beginning of the New Kingdom, about 1500 B.C., a great innovation was introduced in the form of the royal tomb. Hitherto, the primitive

custom had been retained, by which a detached mausoleum in pyramidal form was erected to the Pharaoh in the midst of the necropolis. Now, however, a lodging was provided for the royal mummy by constructing in the mountainside a set of chambers approached by a long corridor. The rock itself here served as a colossal funeral mound, towering above the Pharaoh's resting place. The sovereign was no longer interred, as formerly, in the midst of the graves of his subjects, but at a distance, in a lonely valley of the Libyan mountain-chain, enclosed by the naked rocks. This valley was so narrow that there was no space in front of the tomb for a temple to the dead; this, therefore, was separated from the grave proper and a special sanctuary built in the plain in its stead. These rock-tombs of the Pharaohs and the temples connected with them, which were sometimes of great magnificence, have been preserved up to the present day on the western bank of the Nile near Thebes, the ancient capital of the Empire.[1]

The memorial temples of the kings were probably equipped very much like the contemporary sanctuaries of the gods. On the other hand, the sacrificial chambers of private tombs were probably not supplied with any very great variety of equipment:

[1] In the so-called Valley of the Kings (Arabic *Bîbân el-Mulûk*); cp. Baedeker's *Egypt* (5th edition), p. 262 *ff.*

one or two stone tables on which the food destined for the dead was laid, a few troughs or high stands with bowls of granite to receive the drink-offerings, occasionally a few small obelisks of stone, which were erected in front of the false door much as the great obelisks stood before the gates of the temples—that was nearly all the movable furniture to be found in these chapels. The grave proper, the subterranean chamber in which the dead slept, was much more richly furnished. The mummy was here laid amidst a crowd of objects intended to alleviate the lot of the deceased and to provide him with a happy life in the hereafter.

In the earliest period the corpse was interred in a kind of crouching attitude, the legs drawn up, the hands laid in front of the face. As a rule the head was turned to the north, the face towards the east to see the rising sun. The body was sometimes wrapped in a linen cloth or laid in a simple wooden chest; usually, however, it was placed in the grave entirely without covering. The offerings by which it was accompanied were chiefly destined for its nourishment; they consisted of beer-jugs and other vessels which to-day contain ashes, probably the remains of food that was burnt. Besides this there were vessels of stone containing all kinds of ointments, thin plates in curious shapes on which the dead man was

to rub the rouge required for his toilet after death as in life. Arms, too, of all kinds were provided for his defence against his enemies, as well as amulets for his protection against evil spirits.

In the Old Kingdom, in the age of the pyramids, a new mode of burial came into fashion. The dead man no longer crouched in the tomb, but was placed in the grave lying upon one side as if asleep. A pillow was even placed under his head. The corpse itself was carefully embalmed, converted by a great variety of processes into a mummy, and thus protected from decomposition. The internal organs of the body were removed and buried in special jars. These visceral vases, which are commonly spoken of as "canopic," were under the protection of four genii, children of the god Horus, whose part was to guard them, and therefore also the man, from hunger and thirst. Accordingly they generally had for lids the heads of these divinities: the head of a man, of an ape, of a jackal, and of a hawk.

The body itself was laid in salt water and treated with bitumen; it was then rolled in bandages and cloths, while the abdominal cavity was also plugged up with linen rolls and cushions. The mode of embalming, moreover, differed at different times. Herodotus[1] tells us that in his day there were no fewer

[1] Herodotus, ii., 86–88.

than three processes, more or less complicated according to their costliness. In the most expensive of these the corpse was placed in the hands of specially trained embalmers, who first of all drew out the brain by an iron hook passed through the nostrils, destroying by caustic drugs what could not be removed in this manner. An incision was next made with a sharp flint knife in the soft parts, and the viscera taken out. These were cleaned, palm wine was poured, and all manner of spices were strewn over them. The abdomen was filled with myrrh and other aromatic substances and then sewed up again. The body was now left to lie for seventy days in a solution of natrum, that is, actually pickled. After the lapse of this time the corpse was once more washed, rolled in linen, and smeared over with gum. In this manner a first-class mummy was produced. You will now, I imagine, have heard enough of the methods of this branch of industry, and will be ready to excuse me from describing to you, again in the words of Herodotus, the two cheaper modes of embalming.

The mummy was generally laid in a rectangular chest of wood or stone. The surface of this was polished; frequently, however, it was decorated on the outside, like a royal tomb of the oldest period, with a number of doors intended to afford exit and

entrance to the dead man. At the head-end, where the face lay, it was not uncommon to insert a pair of eyes; by the aid of these the deceased was expected to look forth from the coffin and behold the rising sun. The inner surfaces were at a later time inscribed with texts relating to the life after death,—chapters from the *Pyramid-Texts* and from the *Book of the Dead;* in addition there were pictorial representations of all possible things which the dead man could need in the hereafter. Under this category there naturally came food and drink in great quantities, but at the same time ornaments, weapons, articles of clothing, objects relating to the toilet, sandals, and so on, were not forgotten.[1] At a later time the coffins often received the form of mummies with uncovered face; they were decorated by imitation bandages, in the spaces between which were inscriptions and pictures of the gods, all destined to procure the welfare of the deceased.

From the time of the Old Kingdom the number of funeral offerings continually increased. How numerous they were is best shown by a discovery belonging to the time of 2100 B.C., which was made two years ago in a priest's grave in the Memphian necropolis.[2]

[1] Cp. Steindorff, *Grabfunde des Mittleren Reichs in den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin.*

[2] Near the pyramid of the king Ne-woser-rē at Abusir.

The objects are now preserved in the museum of Leipzig University. In order to provide for the nourishment of the dead man there had been placed in his grave first of all a little wooden granary, which looks like part of a marionette show, but which follows the pattern of an actual granary down to the smallest details. In a walled-in yard entered by a gate there stand the silo-like grain chambers; the corn is being measured in the court, servants carry the grain in sacks up to the roof and discharge it through little windows into the store chambers, while a scribe squats close by and registers the number of the sacks delivered. It is thus that the deceased is provided with the raw material for his maintenance; for the preparation of his food there is a model of a kitchen yard, in which animals may be slaughtered and roasted, bread baked, and beer brewed. Four small ships, two propelled by oars and two by sails, manned by miniature sailors, are at his disposal to convey him over the waters of the heavens and bring him to the Fields of the Blessed. There are other departments, too, in which imitations supply the place of the sometimes costly real articles: little copper tools, a wooden quiver with arrows, a wooden pillow, and a pair of wooden sandals. The handsomely painted wooden figures of a man and a woman carrying food to the dead

man,—a goose among other things,—are intended to wait on him as his servants. Weapons and sticks, earthen dishes and jugs, again as a matter of course filled with eatables and drinkables, complete this interesting tomb equipment.[1]

But the objects I have described by no means exhaust the imaginative providence of the Egyptians. Often little hippopotami were placed in the grave with the dead in order that he might follow his favourite occupation in the hereafter by hunting these pachydermata.[2] Instruments of music and sets for the game of draughts were provided for his entertainment; highly ornamented fans were to afford him coolness. Figures of women, too, were added that he might have the pleasure of their company, but, remarkably enough, these have no feet, doubtless in order to guard against the possibility of their running away from the grave. Indeed, the dead man was sometimes provided with a duplicate head, in case his own, as was to be feared, should be taken from him in the hereafter by evil spirits.

From the beginning of the New Kingdom amulets and magic figures play a special part in insuring the

[1] Cp. also Steindorff, *Grabfunde des Mittleren Reichs in den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin.*

[2] Cp. G. Maspero, *Guide to the Cairo Museum* (Cairo, 1903). p. 373.

welfare of the deceased. Since agricultural labour in the "Fields of the Rushes" often seemed too hard for the dead man, it was sought to help him by placing little figures in the grave with him. These were intended to assist him in the field, and for this purpose they carried the necessary implements. The name of the dead man was written upon them, or else a whole magic formula which at the right moment was expected to call them to life and set them doing their work.

You will remember that according to a later doctrine the heart of the dead man was required to be weighed before Osiris. Since, however, the actual heart had been removed from the body in the process of embalming, it was replaced by a heart of stone, generally in the form of a scarab, which was laid beneath the mummy bandages, and which was conjured by a magic formula to speak for the dead man in the lower world. "O heart,"—so it ran,—"heart that I have from my mother, O heart that dost belong to my being, appear not as a witness against me [in the judgment hall before Osiris]; be not my adversary before the judges, contradict me not before the officer of the balance. Thou art my spirit that is within my body, suffer not our name to stink . . . tell no lie against me before the god."

Another amulet, made in the form of the sacred stake worshipped as a fetish in the Delta-city Busiris, was destined to prevent the dead man being turned back at the gate of the West; "let bread be given to him, with beer and cakes and much meat, upon the table of Osiris; for he is justified against his enemies in the realm of the dead, excellently well and over and over again."

Lastly, we should mention an amulet of frequent occurrence which had the form of a knot and was made, by preference, of red jasper. It was regarded as the emblem of the goddess Isis, and the supposed consequence of its being worn on the neck was that "Isis protects the wearer, and Horus rejoices when he sees it." According to another account, it also fulfilled a second purpose, similar to that served by the stake which I have just mentioned; through its agency, "the dead man follows Osiris in the realm of the dead, the gates of the underworld are open to him, barley and spelt are given to him on the 'Field of Rushes' [in heaven] and he is like the gods who abide there."

But enough of amulets, with which the mummy was sometimes covered in the later period to the number of hundreds, as if with a suit of defensive armour.

It need hardly be said that a people which

expended so much labour on the construction and furnishing of a tomb as the Egyptians did must have solemnised the day of burial, on which the departed entered into his last "eternal dwelling-place," with quite special ceremonies, even if we had not pictures from all periods of Egyptian history by which these elaborate funeral rites are brought visibly before our eyes.

In cities, such as Thebes, where the necropolis was not on the same bank of the river as the city of the living, the mummy was carried across on a richly adorned bark : a priest of the dead recited the prescribed prayers before it and offered incense. Friends and kinsmen, men as well as women, accompanied it with loud cries and lamentations. When the boats had reached the opposite bank, the coffin was set upon a sledge drawn by cattle and conveyed to the city of the dead. When the long procession of mourners had arrived at the entrance of the tomb, the mummy was once more taken from the coffin and placed upright before the gravestone by a priest wearing the mask of the jackal-headed Anubis, the god of the dead. While the relatives were taking their last farewell of the departed, the priests repeated their prayers and prepared him for his last journey. At this point a special ceremony was performed, the opening of the mouth. To the

accompaniment of magic formulæ the mouth of the dead was opened by a hook, and the faculty thus restored to him of making use of his mouth whether for speaking, eating, or drinking.[1] After this the coffin with the mummy was carried to the opening of the grave-shaft and lowered by a long cord into the depths, where the grave-diggers received it.

If such were the labour and care bestowed upon the interment of a human being, how much more elaborate a funeral must have been required when a "living god," that is a sacred animal, had been snatched away by death! Even in the most ancient times special burial-places seem to have existed in which took place the interment of the animals kept in the temples, such as the Apis-bulls of Memphis, the Mnevis-bulls of Heliopolis, the sacred rams of Mendes. In the case of Apis we know that he was embalmed just like a man and buried with great pomp. In the earlier period, the Apis-bulls were laid to rest in special graves; Ramses II. caused a common burying-place to be laid out for them, which afterwards became a much frequented centre of pilgrimages. This was the so-called "Serapeum," situated near Sakkara in the desert, of which the huge subterranean passages

[1] Cp. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 320, 321.

with their colossal stone sarcophagi are still admired to-day.[1]

In the later period, in the last few centuries before Christ, when the worship of animals was continually gaining ground, and the quality of sacredness attached not merely to the individual animals which in particular localities were the vehicle of divine manifestations, but to the whole species, it came to be regarded as a particularly meritorious act to give sepulture to all dead animals of that species. Large common graves were employed for this purpose, which sometimes contained hundreds of animal mummies. Thus at Bubastis, for example, there is a large cemetery of the cats worshipped there; at Memphis, numerous burial-places of the sacred ibises; at Ombos, in Upper Egypt, large graves of crocodiles, in which animals both old and young, from six to ten feet long, together with quite little ones, had been interred. At the same time, on particular occasions, a sacred animal was buried in a grave of its own, as is the case sometimes with one of our favourite dogs, and received not only a coffin but also a gravestone with an inscription. A particularly interesting monument of this kind is possessed by the museum at Berlin, interesting chiefly

[1] Cp. Mariette, *Le Serapéum de Memphis;* Baedeker's *Egypt* (5th edition), p. 135.

for this reason, that it was set up by a Greek domiciled in Egypt.[1] It stood above the grave of a snake which had been killed by an unknown person, and contained the following distich, written, it must be confessed, in somewhat defective Greek:

"Thou stranger, halt at the crossways, before the great stone, and thou wilt find it bursting with writing.
Bewail me with loud lamentation, me the sacred, long-living snake that was sent to the lower world by wicked hands.
What profit hast thou, thou worst of men, that thou didst rob me of this life?
For my brood shall be fatal to thee and thy children; for in me thou hast killed a being that is not alone upon earth.
But as numerous as is the sand upon the seashore is the race of animals upon earth, and verily they will send thee to Hādes not first but last, after thou hast seen with thine own eyes the death of thy children."

* * *

We have now come to the end. I have endeavoured to describe to you in broad outline the rise and fall of the Egyptian religion, the beliefs held by the Egyptians on the Last Things, their worship of the gods and the dead.

And now, at the close of our survey, we raise a

[1] No. 7974 of the Berlin Museum; cp. *Ausführliches Verzeichnis der Aegypt. Altertümer und Gipsabgüsse* (Berlin, 1899), p. 339.

question, which has no doubt already occurred to you: did the Egyptian religion ever strike root outside the narrow bounds of the Nile-land, did it exert any perceptible influence upon the religions of other peoples; above all, for this touches us most nearly, did it influence Judaism and Christianity? Is it, in a word, a religion of great significance in the history of the world?

In the second millennium before Christ, when the Egyptian armies invaded the Soudan and penetrated Asia as far as the banks of the Euphrates, when Egyptian administration was introduced into the subjugated countries or Egyptian garrisons stationed there—then Egyptian worship was also carried into regions beyond the border. Far from the home-land sanctuaries were erected to the gods of Egypt and sacrifices offered. But nowhere—except, perhaps, during the short period of the heretic King Amenophis IV.—was the conquered population, whether of negroes or Asiatics, compelled to abjure their own native gods and transfer its homage to those of the Egyptians. Everywhere, on the contrary, the national religions were left without interference.

Among the divinities worshipped in foreign lands the first place was naturally occupied by the Theban king of the gods, Amon-Rē, the national god of

the new Empire. But in addition, the protecting deities of the other two chief cities of Egypt, Heliopolis and Memphis, received special reverence; the gods Rē-Horus and Ptah. In these divinities the Egyptian state was incarnate; the worship paid to them was a tribute to the authority of Egypt over the conquered countries. It was therefore but a step in advance when, in addition to these gods of the Empire, the King himself, the living representative of the Egyptian power, received divine honours. It is true that the Egyptians had from a very early period regarded the Pharaoh as an incarnation of the god Horus, or as a "son of the Sun-god," and indeed had designated him simply as the "good god"; but on Egyptian soil the King had never been the object of a cult during his lifetime. There was no temple in which his image had been set up by the side of that of the "urban god." This step was first ventured upon in foreign parts, in Nubia, to speak more exactly, for as far as Asia is concerned we have no evidences of king-worship. Chapels were here erected to the King and sacrifices instituted in the Holy of Holies. In a Nubian temple we see the Pharaoh enthroned as god by the side of Amon, Ptah, or Rē-Horus, and receiving divine honour.[1]

[1] Cp. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 503; A. Moret, *Du caractère réligieux de la Royauté Pharaonique.*

The negro inhabitants of Nubia, who at the time of the Egyptian conquest still lay sunk in barbarism, were of all peoples outside Egypt the most receptive of Egyptian civilisation in general. By a gradual process they were educated and Egypticised; at the same time, without any external compulsion, the native gods were displaced by Egyptian divinities, or, at any rate, worshipped side by side with them under an Egyptian form. In Nubia the power of the priests over the people was developed to a still greater extent than in Egypt itself. After a separate empire, independent of the motherland, had been formed on the Upper Nile about the year 1000 B.C., the kings at the head of it came entirely under the control of the clergy. No enterprise, so we are told, could be begun unless the consent of the gods, that is to say, of the priests, was first obtained. "The kings marched into the field when Zeus-Amon commanded them through his oracle, and they went wherever he sent them."[1]

All the ritual precepts, and especially the dietary laws, were observed by the ancient Nubians more strictly than by the Egyptians themselves; and in regard to the Nubian King Piankhi, for example, who, about the eighth century B.C. undertook an expedition into the lower Nile valley, we learn that

[1] Herodotus, ii., 29.

he did not permit the native princes to enter the palace, "because they were unclean and ate fish, which is an abomination to the palace."

Accordingly, in the period when religion in Egypt was on the decline and the power of the clergy visibly diminishing, Nubia was more Egyptian than the Egyptians themselves; and it is quite intelligible that Ethiopia was regarded by the Egyptian priests as the classic land of the orthodox Egyptian religion. These facts explain how the Greek authors came to adopt the fundamentally false view that Ethiopia was the cradle of the whole Egyptian civilisation. With this civilisation the Egyptian religion subsequently decayed in Nubia; and probably not much that was Egyptian still remained there when in the fourth century after Christ the cross was planted south of the cataracts of Assuan.

Under the reign of the sovereigns of the New Kingdom the worship of the Egyptian national god Amon-Rē had been carried by Egyptian colonists into the oases of the Libyan desert, situated to the west of the Nile valley, and was maintained there long after Amon had ceased to stand at the head of the Egyptian Pantheon. In the oases Kharge and Bahriye, the oases Magna and Parva of the Romans, there stood sanctuaries of Amon; but they were both far surpassed in celebrity by the holy place

which the god possessed in the most western of the oases—Sive, the special oasis of Zeus-Amon. Here, too, was to be found an oracle of the god, possibly modelled on the Theban pattern, the fame of which soon reached the neighbouring Libyans, and was carried to Cyrene, and even as far as Greece. By the time of Cyrus, in the sixth century B.C., it was counted among the most highly regarded oracles of the ancient world. The splendour of its reputation, however, was at its highest in the year 331, when Alexander the Great undertook his romantic expedition to it through the desert, and was greeted by the priests of the ram-headed Amon as a son of the god.[1]

In Syria and Palestine, where Egyptian authority enjoyed undisputed supremacy for hundreds of years in the second millennium before Christ, Egyptian civilisation had also exerted its influence. Egyptian elements invaded the art of the Syrian lands, and entered into a peculiar combination with the more ancient Babylonian elements which had hitherto played the chief part. Egyptian cults, too, found reception in the cities occupied by the Pharaoh's troops; in many places sanctuaries were built to the Egyptian gods; thus, to take only one example, King Ramses III. erected a temple in Canaan to Amon, the god of the Empire. But the

[1] Cp. Steindorff, *Durch die Libysche Wüste zur Amonsoase.*

worship of the indigenous Baalim and Ashtaroth suffered no injury through this foreign invasion; on the contrary, they received additional homage from the Egyptians who had entered Syria. Thus, according to all appearances, the Egyptian religion gained no firm footing in Asia, and at the moment when the last garrison was withdrawn, it is probable that the sacrifices to Egyptian deities came to a sudden end.

Such was the course of events in foreign civilised countries, but it was probably in a very different manner that the Egyptian religion influenced such aliens as had settled in the Nile valley, where both in the city and in the country they would come into contact with the Egyptian priests, Egyptian gods, and modes of worship governed by fixed rules dating from the remotest antiquity. Your thoughts, like mine, will, no doubt, at once turn to the Israelites, who, according to the biblical narrative, dwelt for a long period as strangers in the Egyptian land of Goshen; whose great law-giver, Moses, is said to have received his education at the Pharaohs' court, and to have learned the wisdom of the Egyptians. In touching here on the residence of the children of Israel in Egypt, and discussing the question of the influence exercised by the Egyptian religion and civilisation upon the Hebrews, I shall be obliged to confine myself to the most necessary facts. It is

not my intention, in view of the controversy on Babel and the Bible which has agitated so many people in Germany, and perhaps also in your own country, to start another one on *Memphis and Moses*.

Let me remark, in the first place, that the residence of Joseph in Egypt is not mentioned in any passage in Egyptian literature, and that even the name of Moses nowhere occurs in the inscriptions. On these grounds the historical character of the events narrated with so much detail in the Bible has been called in question by various modern scholars and relegated by them to the realm of legend. In my opinion that is very much too sceptical a view. It is true that those narratives in the books of Moses are embellished by an abundance of accessory fiction, by legendary features which are not found here alone—I will only refer to the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and to Joseph's dreams,—but on the other hand the sections of the Pentateuch relating to Israel in Egypt reveal so excellent a knowledge of the conditions in ancient Egypt, they occupy, further, so wide a space in the ancient Israelitish tradition that we ought not without further parley to eliminate them as unhistorical.[1] It is certainly no easy task to eliminate authentic history from the

[1] Cp. Spiegelberg, *Der Aufenthalt Israels in Aegypten im Lichse der aegyptischen Monumente* (Strassburg, 1904).

legendary accounts of Genesis and Exodus, no easier than it would be to tabulate historical events of the Nibelungenlied without previous knowledge of the migration of the Nations. To the best of my belief we ought hardly to assume as historic facts more than the existence of Hebrew tribes in Egypt and the personality of Moses. It is impossible to assign dates for the sojourn and Exodus of the Israelites; it must suffice us to place these in the second half of the second millennium before the Christian Era.

We may be sure that the Hebrews carried away with them from Egypt many manners and customs derived from the civilisation of that country. Among the "gods that brought Israel out of Egypt" was there not the sacred bull worshipped so universally on the banks of the Nile—"the golden calf"? Moses himself, the founder of the Jewish religion, tells us at once by his name that he had been in the closest contact with Egyptian civilisation. For the name Moses is Egyptian, and contains the same element, *Mose*, "child," which we find in numerous names of persons of the time of the New Kingdom, compounded with names of the gods: *Amen-mose*, "Amon's child," *Thut-mose*, "child of the god Thout," or *Ah-mose*, which we have in the Greek forms Amosis and Amasis, the "child of the moon."

That the religion founded by Moses was influenced by Egyptian beliefs, that the law and the worship of the Israelites contained numerous Egyptian elements, is therefore very probable. Thus the new holy receptacle introduced by Moses, the ark of Yahweh, was certainly not independent of Egyptian models, the portable barks already described, in the chapel of which stood the image of the god. In place of the barks, which stood in a special relation to the Nile, we have the ark used for worship in the desert.[1]

What proportion of these ancient Egyptian ideas survived in the monotheistic religion of Israel as purified by the prophets is no doubt a question which we should find hard to answer in detail. In particular I should like to warn you against a view once widely held, namely, that the monotheism of Israel was a theological legacy from the priests of Heliopolis; that the crude monotheism of Amenophis IV. exercised an influence over the Israelites. This is an idle conjecture, with nothing in the history of religion to support it. It is very possible, on the other hand, that in the poetical portions of the Bible many an Egyptian phrase may have been preserved, that whole departments of biblical literature—I am thinking more particularly of proverbial

[1] Cp. Guthe, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (2d edition), p. 39.

poetry—may bear traces of Egyptian influence in their form. But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that there are points of close agreement between the Babylonian and the Hebrew hymns. It is thus by no means easy to adjust the respective claims of Babel and Memphis; what is best in the poetry of the Bible belongs without any doubt to Israel itself.

It was again in all probability no slight influence that was exerted by the Egyptian religion upon later Judaism, in the period of Greek rule, when numerous Jewish communities were established in Alexandria and other Egyptian cities. In this instance, it would appear that eschatological notions were the chief contribution of Egypt to late Judaism, and so, indirectly, to certain Christian circles. When, for example, we find in the early Christian Elias-Apocalypse a mention of a bronze gate to the lower world, we think involuntarily of the fiery gate of the Egyptian Hades.[1] Further, the late Jewish and Christian faith in a resurrection seems to have arisen out of peculiar mystical conceptions, by which we are strongly reminded of the Egyptian ideas concerning Osiris and his resuscitation. There, too, the king, and after him every individual human being, are presented to us as having become one with

[1] Cp. Maspero, *Journal des Savants*, Fauvier, 1899, p. 39 *f.*

the deity, as having passed through the same vicissitudes as the god himself. But here, again, it is certain that Egyptian ideas were not solely responsible for the development of eschatological beliefs, and at the present time it is impossible to isolate the purely Egyptian elements.

It is with much greater clearness that we are able to trace the progress of the Egyptian gods through the Græco-Roman world. As early as the third century B.C. Egyptian cults were imported into Greece, particularly the new divinity Serapis and the circle of gods connected with Osiris: Isis, her son Harpocrates, "the child Horus," as well as Anubis. From Greece they soon found their way to Italy and Rome, where they were hospitably received. The foreign mysterious observances pleased the mass of the people, and they only became the more popular when recognition was refused them on the part of the state and they could only be practised in secret. Finally, in the reign of Caracalla, at the beginning of the third century A.D., the foreign cults were, after manifold vicissitudes, tolerated within the city of Rome. The Emperor himself built a magnificent temple to Serapis on the Quirinal; and the Egyptian gods began to play a leading part in religious life, the importance of which may perhaps be best understood from the bitterness with which

these particular forms of pagan worship were subsequently attacked by the Christians.[1]

The religion of Egypt, like that of Hellas, was finally overcome by Christianity. But the victorious faith retained traces, both internal and external, of both these precursors. It is for this reason that in the religious history of the world the Egyptian religion is entitled to the prominent position which it occupies.

Theodor Mommsen says somewhere[2] that by the side of the works of Hellenic art the Egyptian idol gives us much the same impression as, say, the shoes produced at a wedding which have been worn by the bride in her infancy. And what is true of the idol holds equally of the religion, when we compare it with Greek philosophy or Christianity. According to what we can gather from Egyptian texts, the Egyptian religion contained no deep mysteries; the last word of wisdom was not there spoken, as the Greek thinkers once fondly imagined. Never will the figures of the Egyptian pantheon, with their animal heads and their quaint symbolisms, become as familiar to us as the gods of Olympus, the companions of our youth. But that

[1] Cp. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 292 *ff.*

[2] *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1895, p. 745.

even in the channels of Egyptian faith and observance there flowed a current of true religion, powerful enough to carry away minds of no mean calibre —so much, I confidently hope, has been brought home to you by what you have heard from me. And I conclude with Goethe's immortal words:

"God's is the Orient,
God's is the Occident."

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